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SRI SRI NITYAGOPAL

(Known also as the Yogacharya Sri Srimat
Abadhuta Jnanananda Deva)

Translated from some records

BY

SRIMAT SWAMI
Nityapadananda Abadhuta

MAHANIRVAN MATH.
NABADWIP, NADIA, WEST BENGAL,
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Om

A

FOREWORD

By

Dr. Sj. Mahendra Nath Sircar, M.A., Ph., D.

I have been asked to contribute a foreword to the life and teachings of Yogacharya Abadhuta Jnanananda. I feel my incompetence. I hesitate. The book is a life-history of a man of "mystery." From his birth to the eventual passing into the calm, his life is full of miraculous incidents which at times evoke wonder, sometimes surprise, sometimes admiration and sometimes doubt. To the scientific mind, occultism has been all along a mystery, for it goes unto depths inaccessible to the best intellect. Nityagopal's being was essentially psychic and exhibits phases of psychic colouring, profound depths and inaccessible heights of realization. The book, therefore, has the appearance of a spiritual romance. The central chord of his being was under the continuous flow of noble inspiration which is rare even in the great gifted souls in the realm of spirituality. The tuning of his being was such that even the least spiritual impress had its unfailing and spontaneous expression through the change of form and colour of the body. He changed the unbelievers by the exhibition of spiritual powers. Spiritual men carry an atmosphere of their own and whatever one may understand by spirituality, its concrete phases have

not been closely studied, and left aside as miracles. Miracles they are not. There is occult law which governs such exhibitions of beauty, knowledge and power but the occult world is still a close preserve to the scientific or philosophic intellect. When psychology will develop to the extent of disclosing the finer forces that govern the psychic world, a new chapter in knowledge will be open to humanity and the pathway to a superior evolution in peace and freedom will be found out.

Among the great occultists of the world Nityagopal occupies decidedly a high place and in the world's walhala of saints and inspired teachers he has his unique place and in the creative realm of spirit he has his splendid contribution.

The writer has laid us under deep obligation in acquainting the public with the narrative of his life and anecdotes which otherwise would have been lost. And I sincerely hope that these narratives will be the nucleus to the deeper study and the profound psychological analysis of the mysterious visions in order that the rationale of such experiences may be disclosed.

(Sd.) *Mahendra Nath Sircar.*

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Om Tat Sat Om !

INTRODUCTORY

"I'll lift my hands, I'll raise my voice,
While I have breath to pray or praise ;
This work shall make my heart rejoice
And spend the remnant of my days."

Some years back when my beloved disciple, Sreeman Aumkarananda Paribrajakabadhuta, imposed upon himself the high task of editing 'Sri Sri Nityagopal Charitamrita,' a life in Bengali of our revered *Guru Deva, Bhagawan Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva* (known also as the *Yogacharya Sri Srimat Abadhuta Jnanananda Deva* after His resort to *sannyasa* or the life of renunciation), I found that some of my beloved spiritual brethren, the direct disciples of the Yogacharya, felt inclined to see His glorious earthly career depicted in English in a compiled book for reasons quite obvious to readers. I too felt, under the influence of an ecstasy of adoration, impelled to delineate, in the language, a picture of a 'Character' that had beamed with steady radiance mostly from humble surroundings. The impulse was noble, no doubt ; but the consciousness of my defective knowledge of English coupled with that of my ill-equipped intellect deterred me from hazarding efforts for carrying the impulse into practice. However, the saying—'the supreme mercy of the Lord enables even a

cripple to jump and cross over mountains and a dumb man to recite the holy *Vedas*'—has in the long run brought me to the motive that has prompted this life sketch. My ideas of the *Yogacharya** have been quite inextricably interwoven with those of His causeless mercy specially to the fallen, His divine wisdom, His divine knowledge, His divine love. His infinite spiritual wealth and the miracles worked by Him in different periods of His glorious life. So, I firmly believe that a vivid and happy portrayal of a full-length picture of His Character requires a thorough recognition, nay veneration of His divine *claims*. My first sight of my supremely Merciful *Thakur*, Sri Sri Nityagopal *Deva*, led me to think, "To see Thakur is to reverence Him, to reverence Him is to feel attracted to and then to love Him and to love Him is to know Him, and to know Him is to surrender oneself totally to His hallowed lotus feet for ever." Verily, I cannot resist the impulse to humbly say here that the prayer I then felt prevailed upon to offer Him mentally tallies with the following lines :

"I come to take refuge with the Lord ; may the Divine *Guru* out of His mercy grant that the passions of lust, anger, greed, pride and undue attachment in me may vanish and leave me in peace." I am also strongly inclined to note in this connection that no sooner was I given refuge under the sheltering wings of the supreme, causeless mercy of Thakur than I felt,

*The term '*Yogacharya*' is composed of two words (i) *yoga* and (ii) *Acharya*. '*Yoga*' means 'union with the Supreme Spirit by abstract meditation; communion with God; the particular practices of that abstract devotion by which communion with God is achieved. '*Acharya*' means 'instructor, teacher, professor, a spiritual Guide or Preceptor.'

" 'My eyes are anointed by the *Guru* with the
unguent of knowledge,
And the gloom of ignorance has vanished.
By the touch of the Holy Man light streams into
the mind.' "

Infact, the lives of many *Avatars* (Incarnations) and distinguished saints and seers both of India and outside which have, from times immemorial, been of invaluable service to humanity, would have remained a sealed book to the reading public in all ages and climes, had they not condescended to describe many of the details thereof to their 'own men'. *Bhagawan*¹* Sri Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa *Deva*² 'described to His disciples the days of His God-intoxication.' Lord Jesus Christ 'communicated to the Evangelists all the events associated with His struggles with the 'Evil Spirit' and all His experiences in the wilderness where He had sought for retirement to be alone with God.' Such was the case with *Thakur*³, too. In the course of His conversations with many of His disciples, He would often deal, in an ecstatic, rapturous mood, with many incidents of His life. When, however, His mind would climb down to the relative plane of consciousness, He would seek to throw a veil upon them. This was a characteristic peculiar to Him. But absorbed in intense, spiritual moods, He 'would narrate them in the form which would convey at once the truest impression and the most instructive

*1. The term 'Bhagawan' means 'the Supreme Being possessed of the divine attributes of omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, invisibility etc.' 2. The term 'Deva' means 'God, a Celestial, a Divinity, a Deity and so on.' 3. The term 'Thakur' means 'Lord or Master or Deity.'

lessons.' In this book-let I have not confined myself within a brief survey of His narration merely ; I have collected various other facts, as will be evident afterwards, from various other quarters as well.

Now, our revered *Guru Deva* was naturally disposed to live a secluded life far removed from the dust and din of the busy world. Had He appeared before the world with His enchanting, extraordinary physical graces and infinite spiritual wealth, His name would have loomed large in the galaxy of Indian *Sadhus* (righteous men of renunciation) and fame would have blown it very widely. He would, no doubt, move at times from place to place. But the mask of an ordinary individual He was given to wear, proved to be an unceasing bulwark against even the keen, penetrating vision of a close, accurate observer. Of course, the mask in some cases, though limited, dropped off and revealed Him to devotees and lovers who were blessed with the privilege of basking in the sun-shine of His infinite mercy. Indeed, His earthly career was a series of such wonderful incidents as are likely to stagger the belief of man and appear to be the figment of imagination.

A Child of many prayers and mystic birth, He became absorbed in the supremely blessed state of *nirvikalpa samadhi* (the state of remaining totally merged in or identified with the Absolute) even at the tender age of two years and six months and muttered into His grand mother's ear the *mantram* (holy, mystic formulæ) regarding her *Ishta Devata* (Favourite and Chosen Deity).

The loss of His parents in His boyhood affected His brilliant academic career, no doubt ; but He acquired, by private study, a masterful command over the English,

language, nay over the Eastern and Western systems of thought and forms of culture. Indeed, He could also speak English with the fluency of a graduate of those days.

Verily, to those who were accorded the favour of close association with Him, the Yogacharya appeared to be 'the very Flood of supreme, divine love,' 'the very Glory of supreme, divine wisdom' and 'the very Embodiment of the Universal Religion.' His life was a series of self-denying duties and miracles. 'Never was He found in the seeking attitude but became conspicuous as the Perpetual Giver of light, life and love. Any song on God would throw Him into the blessed state of superconsciousness, the heart remaining always perfectly attuned to transcendental bliss.' At such times He would also be dissolved into ecstasies and dance like *Mahaprabhu Sri Sri Gouranga Deva* overwhelmed with divine emotions ; and a torrent of tears would flow incessantly down His eyes. His life and creed 'stifled the development of caste prejudices among His disciples. They were instructed to deal a death blow to the evil spirit of antipathy, rivalry and jealousy, sectarianism, communalism and schism, rend asunder all curtains and strike out all veils of discord and difference and tune themselves in love and fellow-feeling with one another' as the children of the same Supreme Father. But He did nothing to disturb the existing social order.

The sun of infinite spiritual wealth shone at the zenith of glory in all the periods of His career, although behind the gaze of the public. Indeed, many *bhaktas* (devotees) saw the divine forms of their *Ishta Devatas* (such as *Kali*, *Durga*, *Shiva*, *Radha-Krishna*, *Sri Gouranga*, *Rama* and so on and even *Jesus*) manifested from Thakur Sri Sri

Nityagopal Deva's body. Hence did they directly realize that Thakur was both 'One' and 'Many'. Hence did they directly realize that the Supreme Being, though essentially One, manifested (or manifests) Himself in manifold Forms (such as *Shakti*, *Shiva*, *Vishnu*, *Ganesh*, *Suryya* and so on). Hence did they directly realize that the several Gods and Goddesses, that are the Presiding Deities and Subject-matters of the several *Dharmas* (such as *Shaktaism*, *Shaivaism*, *Vaishnavism*, *Ganapatyism*, *Souraism* etc.), although They are formally different from One Another, are essentially One. Hence also did they directly realize that the several *Dharmas* (religions) too are essentially non-distinct from one another. Indeed, the conduct and behaviour of our *Samanvayacharya* Thakur enabled the bhaktas to comprehend quite easily His doctrine that 'He, who, according to various *Aryya* sastras, is the Eternal Formless *Brahman*, the Supreme Lord, the Ruler or Regulator of the Universe, the Divine Being possessed of six Lordly powers, *Narayana*, *Srikrishna*, the Four-handed *Vishnu*, the Goddess of energy (or the Female Energies of *Shiva*, *Vishnu* etc.) *Shiva*, *Ganesh*, *Suryya* and Others, the Spirit and Matter, the Formless, the Embodied, the Form, Various Incarnations, of various Forms, is, indeed, *Allah* and *Khoda* of the Moslems, *Jehova* of the Jews and other ancient Nations and God of the Christians.' The *bhaktas* also marvelled to see remarkable and amazing changes of colour, stature and shape in His person. He was known to appear simultaneously in different places in different bodies. He was the very Ocean of mercy and compassion ; this is why even many, denied and condemned by the society as the fallen and

the wretched, enjoyed, in a remarkable degree, His causeless mercy and love. Deep, indeed, was His love for His *bhaktas*; it would manifest itself in manifold aspects and attitudes in His dealings with them.

His resort to sequestration in Calcutta and the suburbs, Benares, Brindaban, Nabadwip, Hooghly and certain other places perhaps fructified into the production (in simple *Bengali*) of a large number of volumes (the majority of which have not yet seen the light of day), which have become the never-failing and perennial sources of instruction and inspiration to the aspirants of all sects. Being the Preacher* of the all-embracing doctrine of the Universal Religion, He synthesised into a harmonised whole the apparently conflicting views of several sects, communities and schools including those of dualists and non-dualists. He also stretched His generous hands to all and sundry without the distinction of caste, creed and nationality. His books are of universal appeal. They owed their origin not so much to scholastic attainments as to intensive meditation and divine wisdom and rare realization. Written in a homely language and couched in a catchy style, they are capable of being grasped by the people of even a poor discernment. They are also remarkable for their very simple way of solving even hair-splitting problems of Indian philosophy, and religion with rare penetration and insight.

It should also be mentioned in this connection that, born about ninety three years back in B. S. 1261 with a silver spoon in His mouth, He betook Himself to the blessed life of supreme renunciation, even when He was

* Thakur was a great Synthesising Preacher and so He is called the Samanvayacharya also.

in His teens immediately after being initiated with *Brahma mantra* (the *mantra* regarding the Supreme, Eternal, Formless Being) into the doctrine of *Rishabha Deva*, the eighth Incarnation of the Supreme according to *Srimad Bhagavatam*, by Paramahamsacharya Srisrimat Swami Brahmananda Abadhuta Maharaj. The Paramahamsacharya flourished, by the middle of the nineteenth century, at Hinglaj, a sacred place to the Hindus in Baluchistan, though rarely visited. Our revered *Guru Deva* declared Srisrimat Brahmananda Maharaj to be an Incarnation of *Rishabha Deva*.

The Yogacharya renounced His earthly frame about 37 years back at "Nitya Math," Hooghly, whence His holy body was conveyed to Mahanirvan Math*. Rash Behari Avenue, Kalighat, Calcutta and interred there. A towering temple now stands over the holy burial.

Now it is incumbent upon me to sincerely thank my beloved spiritual brethren including Srimat Swami Haripadananda Abadhuta, Srimat Swami Nityagourabnanda Abadhuta, Sreejut Dharmadas Roy and Sreejut Satis Chandra Sen, for all the help I have received from their writings and talks in preparing this volume.

I pray fervently to my revered *Guru Deva* for the welfare of those devout souls, who have been prompted, I think, by an inner urge of self-devotion and self-sacrifice, to volunteer to bear the cost of printing this volume and to take the trouble of helping me in completing this work and seeing it through the press. Indeed, but for their help

* The term 'Math' means 'a temple, a pagoda, a building occupied by ascetics or sannyasins, a monastery, a hermitage, an abbey etc.'

the book would not have seen the light of day. But at their earnest request I feel precluded from mentioning their names.

While I remained occupied with the high task of writing this volume, I went through a number of books* which proved extremely helpful to me.

It behoves me also to admit that errors, nay mistakes must have crept into my composition. But I fervently hope that the readers will deal with them liberally in view of my noble purpose of trying to enlighten them in simple English on the wonderful incidents of the glorious earthly career of a really Great One. I shall feel amply paid for all the labour I have undergone in giving the life of Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva to the world, if it serves to quiet the fury and eradicate the evils of sectarianism and communalism, 'bring conviction to doubting minds' and 'win to devotion lukewarm hearts,' chalk out to seekers of Truth the real path of righteousness and prove illuminating, thought-provoking and edifying to all and sundry.

*Space does not allow me to mention them here. I freely used some of them and thence, as is now evident, derived much benefit. It becomes me also to note, in this connection, that I have inserted in this book many passages quoted from some works including Dr. Annie Besant's translation of *Srimad Bhagawad-Gita* and 'The psalm of peace,' an English translation of Guru Arjun's '*Sukhmani*' by Sj Teja Singh, M. A., of Khalsa College, Amritsar.

Sri Sri Gurupurnima tithi, Nabadwip (Nadia), July 20, 1948, Nitya Era 94.	Nityapadananda.
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I

Om Tat Sat Om!

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

"Fountain of life and living breath,
 Whose mercies never fail nor fade,
 Fill me with life that hath no death,
 Fill me with light that hath no shade !
 Appoint the remnant of my days
 To see Thy power, and sing Thy praise."

"I will sing unto My Lord, *Guru Jnanananda Deva*,
Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, because *He* has dealt
 bountifully with me."

Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was sprung from the illustrious Basu family of Ahiritola, Calcutta. His forefathers were men of refined manners and taste and reached eminence and celebrity by their achievement of glorious deeds, nay their firm adherence to ancient Indian cultures, customs and institutions. Indeed, they were staunchly devoted to a life of religious austerity, munificent to a fault and given to revere and visit shrines and other sacred places and extend an unbounded hospitality to all without the distinction of caste and creed. Verily, they were such noble souls as sincerely seek, by their conduct and behaviour, to make their peace with heaven. Their prosperity, too, was at its

'height. In short, they possessed such qualities of head and heart as extort spontaneous obedience and entitle one to receive the respectful homage of all and sundry and ascend to the pinnacle of distinction.

Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva's grand father, Sreejut Ramkanai Basu, was a man of sacred renown. He was the son of the well-known *Dewan* Ramkanta Basu, a man of virtuous and noble character, who succeeded to the cultures and high distinction of an illustrious family and was animated by the highest ideals. He was given to maintain the spirit and usages of those from whom he was descended. He was, besides, a great patron of piety. This is well-attested by his having established at Konnagar in Hooghly the distinguished image of *Kali* named after him "Ramkanteswari." Infact, he died leaving a name that has every claim to be still held in high esteem. His grand son, *Mahatma* Janmejay Basu, was a man who combined with his manly beauty a commanding genius and singular character. In short, the virtues of a really great soul including deep devotion to veracity and righteousness, and innate courtesy were the prominent features of his character. The marks of ancient Indian culture still lingered in him and that in a remarkable degree. Indeed, he was a man of such a type for whom there is the promise of enduring peace and perpetual bliss and liberation from the painful cycle of births and deaths. Although, to all appearance, he was addicted to the world, never was he crushed to the earth by the extremely heavy pressure of worldly concerns he had to manage and household affairs he had to direct, nay he rose buoyant from it and made it a whet-stone to great progress in piety. He was fortunate

enough to be initiated by an *Abadhuta**. And it was but natural that his heart should burn with an insatiable thirst

* "An *Abadhuta* is one who has been delivered from the snares of hopes, who is of a perfectly stainless character, who shines in eternal bliss, who has banished all his desires, who is spoken of as a sinless, immaculate Soul, who is given to worry about neither the past nor the future but shines in the present (state) in delight (or ecstasy), whose body is or remains besmeared with dust, who is *whole* and *hale*, whose mind is purified (from all stains of sins and vices and shortcomings), who has transcended the stage of steady abstraction (or devoted application of mind to communion with God) and profound, divine meditation (with a view to realize God), who has been freed from the cares and anxieties of the world and all striving (evidently for the attainment of worldly objects), who is always given to meditate on the true nature of the soul as being one and the same with the Divine Spirit pervading the Universe and who has been fully relieved from ignorance (or worldly delusion or inertia) and conceit (or egotism)".

"An *Abadhuta* is not under the necessity of staunchly observing the practices requisite in reaching union with the Supreme like a *Yogi*. He is given neither to enjoy worldly objects and pleasures like a worldly-minded man nor to desire liberation like a *Jnani* (here, one given to cultivate spiritual knowledge) nor to show his strength like a hero (or a valiant man) nor to practise control or abstinence like a sedate. He is neither a *Shaiva* nor a *Shakta* nor a *Vaishnava*. He is given neither to follow nor to hate (nor is mimically disposed to) the rules of conduct and prohibitions enjoined by any *sampradaya* (or sect) of worshippers. He shines like a *Shiva* (in flesh and blood) whose very Self is supreme bliss....."

"He who is never disquieted at heart even in the midst of objects of sense, who has reached the loftiest position in the sphere of spirituality or righteousness, who has been liberated from the ties of the world and who has perfectly realized the full significance (or spirit) of the great saying "That (i.e. the Supreme, Perpetual, Undiminishing *Brahman-Self*) thou art" and has thus known the divine (or spiritual) truth, is spoken of as an *Abadhuta*....."

and passion for spiritual advancement since his receiving the initiatory *mantra* (or incantation of prayer) from him. He was an heir to affluence, no doubt ; but his householder's life was mingled, as is now evident, with the rigid devotions, excessive rigour and self-denial of a recluse.'

He was linked through matrimonial connection with three families including the distinguished and aristocratic Ghose family of Panihati (24 Parganas), to which his youngest wife, the pure-souled Gourimani, the daughter of the noble Sitanath Ghose, belonged. This venerable lady was an exquisitely beautiful and extremely pious woman of a comprehensive genius and inflexible dignity of soul. So, when the knot of their garments was tied and their hands were united in propitious moments, *Mahatma* Janmejay and the pure-souled Gourimani made a supernormal couple, the sight of whom must have augmented the delight of Sreejut Ghose and his devoted wife, the blessed Anandamayee, a highly accomplished woman of exemplary character and their worthy son, Sj Nabin Babu. In due course two daughters were born to the devout couple. They were known as Krishnabinodini and Nityakali. But Anandamayee was not satisfied with this, inasmuch as she had been seized with an ardent, nay irresistible desire to see her daughter Gourimani's arms decked with the gem of a son.

Now, both the mother and the daughter were, as already indicated, endowed with supreme moral excellence, nay fired with the ideals of absolute devotion and hence devotedly attached to the practice of religious austerities. Often would they remain absorbed in devotional excercises. Indeed, like an ideal votress of the *bhakti* cult Sreejukta Anandamayee felt the urge of pinning her faith upon a

tradition. It awakened in a real religious enthusiast like her the conviction that if she succeeded in offering, with truly devotional ardour and persevering zeal, prayers to the well-known *Vireswar Shiva* of Benares, she would obtain Him as her beloved Gourimani's son. So, for the achievement of her purpose, she proceeded to the holy place along with her daughter. Then, on reaching their destination, they gave their whole soul and spirit to the devout observance of the ceremonies and ritualistic details requisite in worshipping Him with the object in view. Of the ingredients and articles offered to Him on the occasion several bits of gold moulded into the shape of *bac leaf* formed part. The termination of the *pujah* (worship) was followed by the appearance of a holy man whose head was furnished with a mass of matted hair and whose eyes were flashing light. They made a profound obeisance to him in a spirit of deep humility and stood before him with folded hands ready to attend to his communication. He solemnly declared, in unequivocal terms, that Sreejukta Gourimani was destined to become the mother of an Extraordinary Son who should, on no account, be allowed to eat the remains of another's meal and beaten with the left hand. In fact, they were enjoined to rear the Child with more than ordinary care and in the attitude of supreme love. They received the intelligence with a profound reverence not unmixed with exultation.

Not long afterwards Sreejukta Anandamayee went back to her home in the company of her daughter buoyed up with high hopes. Now, the village of Panihati in the district of 24 Parganas (Bengal), to which she belonged, was in those days a prosperous one decorated with highly finished

buildings of well-to-do men. Even in the present time it attracts visitors from outside. It derives its holiness from the *Ganga* that flows majestically by it and the Banyan tree below which Lord *Sri Sri Gouranga Deva* held a feast.

As already noted, Sreejukta Gourimani was given to observe, with unwavering devotion, religious practices, a part of which was her regular bath in the *Ganga* (the Ganges) three times a day. Now, she made friends with the wife of the then priest of the temple of '*Dolan Kali*'. And they were so devotedly attached to each other that their failure in close association for a period each day would turn out to be a source of disquiet to each. Consequently, Sreejukta Gourimani's visits to the *Ganga* would invariably be preceded by those to her beloved friend.

However, in course of time Sreejukta Gourimani was in the family way. Still she pursued her daily round of religious duties with unabated zeal. But once on the holy *Basanti Ashtami* day (the second day of the *pujah* of Goddess *Durga* performed in the spring) her failure in her usual afternoon visit to her friend agitated the latter. She awaited Sj. Gourimani's approach in suspense. It was after evening had closed upon her that her beloved friend (Sj. Gourimani) made her appearance. But as she was rather late, she did not loiter there and proceeded straight to the *Ganga*. She was sworn to the most sincere practice of virtue. So her ablution in the holy waters was preceded by a profound obeisance and followed by a devout recital of a hymn on the *Ganga*. The recital was that evening attended with her absorption in deep meditation. This rendered her quite unconscious of the stealthy bore that subsequently occurred to the river.

Now, Sj. Gourimani's abnormal delay in returning caused intense anxiety to her loving friend, the wife of the priest, who, in dire suspense, deputed her son to hasten to the *Ganga* in quest of her. The astonishment of the youngman was beyond bounds when Sj. Gourimani was not visible there. He cast his bewildered eyes around, when lo ! they distinguished a tuft of hair drifting along the current. He girded up his loins and made a headlong plunge and it was not long ere he could lay hold on it. He then made his way back towards the *ghat* along with the object thus secured. He was, however, astounded beyond measure, when, on placing the object of his enterprise on a stair, he found her to be none else but his respected aunt in a state of unconsciousness. He resorted to means which enabled her to recover her senses, and conducted her with the utmost care to his mother.

Her friend received her with every mark of cordiality and joyful eagerness. She offered her congratulations to her son for the noble spirit he had shown in putting his neck in the venture to afford her friend the rescue. Indeed, she exulted over the miraculous deliverance of Sj. Gourimani. She was also filled with a deep sense of thankfulness to God Whose benign providence enabled her so miraculously to have her lost jewel restored to her. She then decked Sj. Gourimani's body with a new piece of cloth furnished with red borders and her forehead with a paint of vermillion. The next step she took was to commit her to the charge of her deliverer to be conducted in safety to her (Sj. Gourimani's) residence.

Hours rolled on till the weather assumed a threatening look and paved the way for the prevalence of a violent

storm and a heavy downpour not unaccompanied with the clashing of thunder. It was at such a time at midnight that Sj. Gourimani was oppressed with the pangs of child-birth. Intense was the anxiety and extremely agitating were the reflections that now laid hold on Sj. Anandamayee. Indeed, she was not at all prepared for the attack. Scarcely had eight months expired since Sj. Gourimani's conception, when she was in travail. No lying-in room had still been built. However, Sj. Anandamayee tried all the resources to tide over the difficulty. A nurse was promptly engaged. She was enjoined to conduct Sj. Gourimani to the side-room beside the staircase ; this then served the purpose of the lying-in room. Sj. Gourimani's entrance into the same was followed by a copious discharge of blood and other filthy matters that are usually attendant on child-birth. But no child was born !

The effect of the unusual incident proved utterly startling and appalling to the nurse. Indeed, her lips were automatically sealed with fear mingled with surprise and refused to part. So even the overwhelming pressure of enquiries most earnestly made by Sj. Anandamayee did not avail to extort from her a reply. Her (Sj. Anandamayee's) patience was now taxed to the extreme and she forced her way into the room. But she was agape with astonishment at the sight of some blood-stained rags lying there unblessed with the presence of her desired object. It gave a rude shock to her heart. Indeed, the very idea that the worship of *Vireswar Shiva* and the prophecy of the *Sannyasin* should become fruitless, proved revolting to her principle of righteous conduct, and religious sentiments. So, fluttered with emotions, she appealed to them most fervently to

grant her the grace that might enable her to realize the miraculous efficacy of the worship and the supreme influence of the words of the *Sadhu*. Being a devout soul, she felt precluded from imputing to them even the least blemish. Rather she bemoaned her bad lot to which she attributed the mishap. While these scenes of confusion, despondency, despair and distress were passing, Sj. Anandamayee's eye distinguished some object stirring amidst the stained rags. Urged by an irresistible impulse, she caught hold of the same and found it to be a female child of about half a cubit in length. But it looked exquisitely beautiful. The attainment of the object even under such miraculous circumstances could not lead to the satisfaction of Sj. Anandamayee. Indeed, she had, since the termination of the *Pujah* of Lord *Vireswar Shiva*, been cherishing a yearning after obtaining an Extraordinary Male Child. Again did she bewail her sad lot and regret the failure of all her efforts and practices.

However, the nurse picked up the Child that had been laid, nay left on the floor by Sj. Anandamayee in disgust. And when she set herself to cut the navel-string of the newborn Babe, she was overwhelmed with wonder and joy to see the marked sign of a male child below the umbilical cord. She then exhorted Sj. Anandamayee to forbear grieving, nay exult over the affair. She asserted, in unambiguous and unqualified terms, that neither the *pujah* of *Vireswar Shiva* nor the prophecy of the *Sadhu* had failed. Indeed, Sj. Gourimani had obtained a male child, she declared, in the early hours of the morning. Just then the atmosphere was astir with the blended noise of conch-shells, gongs, and other instruments sounded together for the

performance of the light-offering ceremony before the Goddess *Basanti* at the house of Sj. Srikantha Charan Dutta at day-break before sun-rise. However, the miraculous incident of the birth of our Revered *Guru Deva* remained veiled in mystery to all present there. But it has made upon the minds of the devoted adherents of the *Yogacharya* an indelible impression that He was *Ayoni-sambhava* (not born from the womb of a female).

Indeed, the truths about the mysterious and mystic birth of an *Avatar* are *revealed* to none but a few really blessed souls. This is well-attested by the following utterances of Lord *Sri Krishna* :

“Though unborn, the Imperishable Self, and also the Lord of all beings, brooding over nature, which is Mine own, yet I am born through My own Power. (6)

Whenever there is decay of righteousness, O Bharata, and there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I Myself come forth ; (7)

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age. (8)

He who thus knoweth My divine birth and action, in its essence, having abandoned the body, cometh not to birth again, but cometh unto Me, O Arjuna. (9)”

Gita, Fourth Discourse.

However, it is impossible for language to describe the complexity of feelings which swelled the heart of Sj. Anandamayee on so miraculous an achievement of her purpose. She marvelled to see the exquisite beauty of the

Babe's form, the lustre of which seemed to illuminate the lying-in room. She had her gaze steadfastly fixed on Him Who adorned the beautiful arms of her beloved daughter, Sj. Gourimani, when she suckled Him. Never did dawn a morrow more auspicious than the following for the rejoicings of Sj. Anandamayee ; indeed, the news of the birth of the Child of extraordinary beauty, having flown from mouth to mouth, 'attracted universal attention, and an immense confluence of persons of all ranks' hastened at peep of dawn to Sreejut Nabin Babu's place to feast their eyes with the sight of the Lovely Object. They were all struck with the majesty of His shape and uncommon loveliness of His countenance and extraordinary splendour of its expression.

Extraordinarily beautiful was the Babe, indeed. His form was exquisitely symmetrical. Besides, 'His remarkably brilliant eyes, superbly arched eye-brows, well-turned forehead, well-formed nose and mouth, round vermilion cheeks, well-shaped ruby lips and sable hair—these constituted a combination of loveliness' which excelled the most beautiful child that the visitors had ever seen. In fact, a halo of divine light radiated from His head and the marks of uncommon greatness were manifestly expressed through His looks. These tempted them all to declare unanimously that He should attain to the highest pinnacle of glory in no distant future.

Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva turned out to be an Object of supreme attachment to the members of the family. They were all attention in ministering to His needs and comforts and keeping vigilant watch upon Him. But circumstances often defy such vigilance and assert their sway. Indeed,

one day His sister lulled the Child to sleep, laid Him on the bed and left the chamber on business ; meanwhile a huge cobra stole into the room, 'coiled its body round Gopal's neck and reared its crest over His head to intercept the ray of the sun' that, making its way through the window, fell upon His face. By chance Sj. Gourimani entered into the same. Her heart swelled, when she saw her beloved Child in the grip of the deadly reptile. She raised her hands to heaven and expected from the Supreme the aid she could not promise herself from human contrivance. Her piteous cry penetrated into the heart of Sj. Anandamayee. She hurried into the room and no sooner did she behold the appalling sight than she uttered a scream that was blown far and wide. And as a result, the neighbours hastened in a body to the spot. They all prayed fervently to God to secure the Child against the fatal bite of the serpent. The commotion awoke Him. Careless of the impending danger, He, with a smile that lent greater enchantment to the captivating expression of His countenance, kicked the cobra. Now, all hopes that the spectators had been entertaining of His rescue were quenched ; since the dangerous animal was not expected to brook the kick. But lo ! the gentle kick of the tender foot prevailed upon it to relinquish its hold and move a few inches off. Sj. Anandamayee readily seized this opportunity and offered the cobra milk and plantain to entice it away from Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. All the neighbours assembled there recited, with deep devotion, a hymn in praise of *Manasa Devi*, the goddess of the serpent-race, so as to please her. However, the cobra partook of the articles of food and slowly left the room. Amidst scenes

of great rejoicings, Sj. Gourimani took Him up with the utmost care and felt perfectly satisfied in getting back her lost 'Treasure' hale and hearty. Now, among the spectators there were some old men, who prophesied solemnly the most eminent position concerning Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. It goes without saying that the serpent offered no injury to Him.

Needless it is to mention that Sj. Anandamayee's devoted attachment for Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva rendered Him an Idol of her heart. Even a moment's separation from her beloved Grandson would throw her into an agony of intense pain. So she was given to resist studiously all obstacles to her attendance on the Child. There appear, however, moments in human life which baffle all schemes and programmes of action so as to pave the way for the occurrence of the inevitable. Such a moment came one day and urged Sj. Anandamayee to lay down Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva comfortably on a swing when He was perfectly absorbed in sleep, and leave the room for the discharge of an indispensable duty. Of course, every precaution necessary for the security of His person was resorted to. But she was astounded beyond measure, when, on her return, she found that the swing had been robbed of its 'Content' by an evil she was at a loss to account for. She could not resist the rude shock the event gave to her tender heart ; and she burst into a passion of sorrow. The violent outcry startled Sj. Gourimani who made her way hurriedly into the chamber. She was agape with astonishment. Indeed, it is impossible for a pen to portray the gloom of sorrow which now rendered dark the beautiful and bright brow of Sj. Gourimani. Both the noble souls offered

prayers with a high glow of devotion. The news was carried to the neighbours who assembled there and sought to quiet a grief which admitted of no consolation. But, to their utter surprise, there arose after some time from the same swing the cry of the beloved Child. And all were overwhelmed with amazement mingled with joy. However, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was henceforward kept under stricter vigilance so as to guard against evils like the previously-mentioned ones.

But scarcely had some days passed after the miraculous deliverance of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva from the foregoing dangers, when another calamity, no less threatening, befell the Child.

The incidents, as stated before, excited a great curiosity in the hearts of Sj. Gourimani and Sj. Anandamayee. They failed to account for them and ascribed them to some inconceivable traits in the Child's character. Besides, the looks of their Idol, Who was, indeed, a Model of perfection, were so captivating that Sj. Gourimani could not often resist the temptation to fix her glances steadfastly on them. At such times she would be thrilled with inexpressible joy not unmixed with admiration. So, once she laid her beloved Child on a couch and was observing His matchless beauty, when a large, black-faced monkey rushed into the room and snatched away her Treasure in the twinkling of an eye.

It is impossible to portray the extremity of terror and nervousness which now laid hold on Sj. Gourimani and seemed at once to overpower all her faculties. She fixed upon the animal her bewildered eyes and hence saw that it

meant to offer the Child no injury ; nay it caressed and kissed Him with overwhelming affection befitting a loving parent. This, however, could not minimise the intensity of her swelling grief and she set up an outcry. It being expressive of wild surprise and apprehension, Sj. Anandamayee hastened to the spot with great concern ; and her eye distinguished the monkey that had assumed a seat on a branch of a huge tree which stood on the courtyard. The sight conjured all the blood from her cheeks. Of course, the behaviour of the monkey was not suspicious, no doubt : still, the animal being very mischievous, she could not forbear taking steps that should expedite the restoration of their beloved Object. So she brought out a bunch of plantains which proved extremely tempting to the monkey. Now it descended from the tree and went to the spot where the fruits were laid, relinquished its hold on the Child and made good its escape with the luscious prize. Thus was Gopal extricated from the clutches of the mischievous animal. The hearts of both the daughter and the mother swelled with a deep sense of thankfulness to God whose mysterious ways saved their beloved Object from the jaws of death. Indeed, they prayed to Him fervently for showering His blessings on Gopal that should ward off all dangers to which He might be exposed in future. In sooth, to offer prayers so ardently is the characteristic of a religious enthusiast who is given to think,

“Oh, would I had a thousand tongues,
To sound Thy praise o'er land and sea ;
Oh, rich and sweet should be my songs
Of all my God has done for me !”

However, Sj. Anandamayeo made a vow of celebrating

the *annaprasana* (rice-giving) ceremony first in the sacred city of Benares with the holy *prasada* (food already offered to a Deity) of *Vireswar Shiva* being put into Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva's mouth. So she went there in the company of her daughter for the accomplishment of the vow ; and Sj. Gourimani discharged her office after a solemn observance of the rites requisite. On this occasion a great many *Sannyasins* and *Brahmanas* were entertained with a sumptuous feast. Next came the turn of Panihati to witness the celebration. It attracted a vast crowd of relatives and guests to the house of Nabin Babu (the brother of Sj. Gourimani), which now presented a magnificent spectacle of feasts and rejoicings. Now, after the termination of the other aspects of the ceremony, a vessel provided with some sacred texts like the *Geeta* and the *Bhagavata* and also some splendid, precious articles was, as is the usage, placed before the Child. And to the great surprise of the spectators, He laid hold of the *Geeta*. Indeed, He paid no heed to the other contents which, owing to their gaudy appearance and splendour, were expected to have allured His eyes. The glance of curiosity, not unmixed with love and tenderness, with which the observers had been regarding the behaviour of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, was now exchanged for that of respectful admiration, nay amazement. This mysterious conduct of the Child was construed by many old men as a sure indication of His attainment of the highest eminence in the sphere of righteousness. It was on the same occasion that Sj Anandamayee conferred upon Him the favourite name of Sri Nityagopal—a name by which He has all along been distinguished in spite of the other ones, such as Kali Kumar, Vireswar.

Prasannakumar and Bala Bhadra, that were given at the same time by His near and dear ones. Time wore on and Sj Gourimani bestowed the utmost care on the rearing of the beloved, lovely Child. Once, however, scarcely had the sun risen far above the horizon, when at the time of bath a *Sannyasin*, whose looks and habits were those of a man off his head, made his appearance in the house and performed a song accompanied with dances. The purport of the song gave Sj. Anandamayee, who was bent upon washing Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva's body with the holy water of the *Ganga*, the impression that her beloved Gopal was the Incarnation of the Supreme. But the behaviour of the holy man astonished her, since no sooner did he finish his music than he disappeared, allowing Sj. Anandamayee not even the least opportunity to ask him any question whatsoever.

Sj. Anandamayee and Sj. Gourimani passed their days amidst scenes of great rejoicings which owed their origin to their observation of the movements and plays of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, the Idol of their heart.

Once, as usual, the Child was busy with the pastimes that were attractive to His nature, when, all on a sudden, His eyes grew red, the golden hue of His lovely body was usurped by paleness, and His glances were steadfastly fixed on His superb eye-brows ; thus did He pass into ecstasy with the pronouncements "*Mother, Mother ; Kali, Kali ; Shiva, Shiva ; Durga, Durga ; Radha, Radha ; Krishna, Krishna* ;" He also laughed.

The accession of high emotions, which often visit none but the few blessed souls who have reached a high stage of spiritual advancement, is, no doubt, attended with the

foregoing signs that manifested themselves from the chubby Child. But it was evidently beyond the pale of His mother's imagination that one of His tender age should be overwhelmed with those. So she ascribed the state, in which He was lost, to a disease she was at a loss to account for and hastened with great concern towards Him. She inferred, from the temperature of His body, that He had fallen a victim to high fever. She also construed His absorption into the condition of superconsciousness as an attack of delirium. It is difficult for language to describe the depths of sorrow and melancholy into which she now sank.

Meanwhile Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was lost in *nirvikalpa samadhi*, the culmination of the meditations and devotions practised by *Yogins*, few of whom, however, succeed in reaching the supreme stage. The signs—namely the failure of pulse and breath and so on—that are attendant on it, were distinctly visible. Being, however, unable to ascertain the cause of His seeming malady and also thinking that the greatest evil had befallen her beloved Gopal, Sj. Gourimani fell down senseless with an appeal to her mother. The cry was piercing enough to attract the advent of Sj. Anandamayee and the other relatives to the spot. The sight subjected Sj. Anandamayee to intense grief and she began to strike her forehead. She bewailed her bad lot and mourned for her Gopal. Indeed, the death of His father had not affected them so much as this event did. The idea of separation from Gopal was too painful. Sj. Anandamayee now recalled, with loud wailings, the enchanting loveliness and smile of the Child and the qualities of head and heart He seemed endowed with.

In the midst of bereavement, however, two things did not elude her perception and observation ; these were the heat and the unusual lustre of His body, which bore an unquestionable testimony to the lingering of the vital air in His system. Three days passed by with little improvement in His condition. However, there appeared a ray of hope in the midst of the encircling gloom of despair. A *Sannyasin*, whose head was furnished with a mass of matted hair and whose form was emitting shoots of light, suddenly presented himself to the place.

All received the reverend *Sannyasin* with every mark of earnestness and cordiality and a profound bow. They also appealed to him fervently to avert the peril that had threatened the family with the loss of the only *Comfort* of life. He, however, desired a view of the Child. On being admitted into His presence, he marvelled to see the super-human beauty and loveliness of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva as well as many auspicious marks ; these he took to be the pledges of His attainment of the loftiest position in future in the sphere of righteousness. He also felt blessed by association with One Who remained absorbed in '*nirvvikalpasamadhi*' at such a tender age. The holy man then eluded the error which had conjured the blood from their cheeks. In fact, the *Sannyasin* gave them a definite assurance that their Lovely Child should presently come to Himself. This pronouncement was followed by his mysteriously speedy disappearance and an immediate achievement of their object. Indeed, it was not long ere Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva had His normal state of mind restored to Him to the joy and admiration of the assembly.

Another trait of the Child's spiritual character bearing

a glowing testimony to His intuition of the all-pervasiveness of Mother *Kali*, manifested itself on two occasions, when He was required to drink milk, and make water. Once the mother held aloft before His mouth a cup of milk for appeasing his hunger with ; but He regretted His difficulty in acting upon her wish, since, as He declared, the presence of the Goddess *Kali* in the milk intercepted His desire for drinking the same. Next, Sj. Anandamayee conducted Him to the drain in order to afford Him the opportunity for answering the call of nature ; the same difficulty, as He said, encountered Him and obstructed His wish.

Now, Sj. Gouri Devi's declining health necessitated a change of environment and climate. So Sj. Anandamayee proceeded to Calcutta in the company of her daughter and Grandson and took up her quarters at Simla.

But subject to the apprehension that His step-brothers might offer Him any injury, she had to stifle the dictates of her strong sense of duty which must have naturally prompted her to send Him along with her daughter to *Mahatma Janmejaya*'s mansion at Ahiritolla. Besides, astrologers had predicted that His meeting with His father must be followed by horrible consequences, inasmuch as that would hasten his (Sreejut Janmejaya's) death. In view of this fact also she felt precluded from achieving the much-needed and much-coveted union of the father with the Son. But Sj. Gourimani was quite in the dark about it. So, once she felt impelled to depute her hand-maid to carry Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva to His father's presence. In obedience to the order of her mistress she did so and presented the 'Treasure' to the 'owner' with the joyful

intimation that the exquisitely beautiful Child was his own Son. At that the father was naturally thrilled with raptures. Indeed, he was quite charmed with the captivating loveliness of His countenance and extraordinary splendour of its expression. He welcomed Him with every mark of cordiality and extremely joyful eagerness, nay with all warmth of deep love and took Him in his arms. He could not also resist the impulse to reward the hand-maid to his heart's content. But as luck would have it, the father was not destined to survive long that happy union. In fact, not long afterwards did he sink into eternal sleep.

It should be noted in this connection that Sri Sri Nitya Deva's step-brothers took advantage of that situation and defrauded Him of His rightful share in His father's Estate.

However, one day when Thakur was three years old, Sj. Gourimani paid her visit along with Him to their Ahiritolla mansion where He made directly for the apartment of the manager of their Estate.

The Child's meeting with the manager of His deceased father's property was followed by His snubbing to the gentleman which both astounded and alarmed him. He reprimanded him (the manager) for his lack of honesty and uprightness in the discharge of his responsibilities; this manifested itself in his withholding from Himself and His mother their rightful share in the income of the vast property left by His father. He delivered the intimation with so surpassing a force and reasonableness that the manager submitted to the strength of His argument and

speech ; and he assured Him of the execution of his commission in the mode then suggested by Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. He (the manager) had heard that His intellect was far in advance of His years. But the Child's dealings with him on that occasion impressed awe on his mind.

However, one night Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was lying in the sweet embrace of His mother, when He presented a solemn look ; He then addressed to her a speech regarding the supreme importance and absolute necessity of *Brahmacharya* (usually, abstinence from sexual intercourse) in the achievement of the supreme end of human life. The speech made in a language corresponding to the look astonished and affected Sj. Gouri Devi so much so that she felt impelled at once to develop an attitude of supreme devotion towards Him.

On another occasion His grandmother, Sj. Anandamayee, was pacing the court-yard with the lovely Child in her arms, when Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva kept aside the usual childish pranks and fickleness ; nay He assumed an awe-inspiring appearance which did not fail to strike her mute. Greater, indeed, was her astonishment, when He muttered into her ear the *mantram* regarding her Ishta Devata. Again, a strange awe fell upon her, when His weight augmented so much that He appeared to be too heavy to be carried in arms. These circumstances filled her with amazement not unmixed with admiration. She now felt prevailed upon to lay Him down and render Him deep devotions in a spirit of prostrated piety. After a while she was relieved of the overwhelming effect of the circumstances and received Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva again.

in the attitude of the grandmother. Now, she could not resist her heart-felt desire for bedecking His lovely body with costly ornaments. A charming person, so sumptuously decorated, presented a spectacle too enchanting to be resisted. So, it was but natural that it should arrest the gaze of a thief. This man's vicious inclination, however, got the better of a desire to approach the Child with the feeling of sincere love. Therefore, he lifted Him up in his arms with the evil design of robbing Him of the splendid decorations in an opportune moment. He, however, failed to see that his sinister motive could not elude the detection of the Extraordinary Child. So, as he was making his escape, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva brought the matter to the notice of a policeman whom He found near by. The thief now realized the gravity of the situation and, laying down the 'Treasure', took to heels. Now it was the turn of the policeman to carry Him home so as to restore Him to the hands of His guardian. He, however, felt greatly puzzled because of his ignorance of the address. But Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva came to his succour.

He detailed the particulars about the family to which He belonged quite accurately. At that the policeman felt it quite prudent to trust to the wonderful talent of the Child for extricating themselves from the difficulty. Thus submitting to His guidance, he succeeded in discharging his responsibility by presenting Him to His grand mother ; he warned her to keep strict watch on Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, and enlightened her on the dangerous situation to which He had been exposed. It is impossible to describe the light of delight that her countenance, which had

darkened on the missing of the Idol of her heart, now flashed, when the reunion with her Object of supreme love was so miraculously achieved. She was filled with a deep sense of thankfulness to God, whose benign providence had effected His hair-breadth escape from the threatening evil, and fervently implored its continuance.

Then, one dark, roaring night afflicted with a heavy downpour and flashes of lightning and clashing of thunder, a host of travellers, way-wearied and assailed by the heavy shower, knocked loudly at the door of the room in which Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva lay on the bosom of His grand mother locked in the arms of the frightened, old lady. In response to the knocking He hastened to the door with a bound and unlocked the same to allow them admittance and shelter. The fatigued way-farers fell an easy prey to a deep sense of admiration mingled with amazement under the captivating influence of the expression of the countenance in which extraordinary elegance and loveliness reigned, nay vied with matchless majesty and splendour. However, they intimated to Him, with earnest entreaty, their urgent need of a fare. The sad plight, in which those poor creatures had fallen, excited pity in His compassionate heart. He extended to them a cordial welcome and invited them to pass the night there. Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, however, could enjoy no peace of mind until He could secure the means of ministering to their needs. So He appealed to Sj. Anandamayee to come to their succour. Sj. Anandamayee, a very generous, tender-hearted and dutiful lady, informed Him with sorrow that the quantity of food, she had at her disposal, would be sufficient to meet the requirements of three or four

individuals only. Indeed, her heart ached, as she saw that it could, by no means, prove helpful to so many persons who were pinched with hunger. However, at the request of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva she made over to Him the whole quantity of rice with which He at once set Himself the task of entertaining the distressed souls. They were perfectly satisfied with His entertainment, inasmuch as their hunger was fully appeased. But both Sj. Anandamayee and Sj. Gourimani were agape with astonishment, when the information of their satisfaction was carried to them. They construed this, too, as an instance of His possession of infinite powers. This, however, remained veiled in their love for the Child, the claims of which asserted their sway over other feelings.

The supreme love of Sj. Gourimani for her beloved Gopal often rendered the least harm to His body unbearably painful to her. So, when the lovely Child once appeared before her with the beautiful limbs stained with mud, they presented to her a very sad spectacle; this served to wound her feelings so much so that every fibre of her heart seemed to bleed. But, to all appearance, she flew into a passion of anger against Him. She then went so far as to transport Him to a dark room and bolt the door in order that it might baffle all His efforts for exit. Of course, this serious step was taken for His correction. However, the darkness of the chamber inspired dread in His mind. And in terror of ghosts, He devoted Himself to the uttering of the Name of 'Rama'—a Name that He hailed as an antidote against the injury likely to be offered by those mischievous beings. This operation was followed by wonderful consequences, inasmuch as the

apartment was suddenly illuminated with shoots of celestial light ; nay, there appeared *Rama* in the company of *Sita* and *Lakshman*, *Shiva* and *Durga*, *Radha* and *Krishna*, *Brahma*, *Narada*, the Shining Ones and Sages with the Divine Mother *Kali* in their midst. She took up, with joyful eagerness, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva in Her arms and suckled the beloved Child. This event was followed by a loud laughter on the part of the Extraordinary Child. It penetrated to the ear of Sj. Anandamayee who made her way in hot haste into the room. The sad plight in which she found the Idol of her heart subjected her to agitating reflections and convulsive emotions. However, she clasped Him, with all warmth of deep love, in a sweet embrace and with a kiss sought to ascertain the cause of the laughter. The communication He then made with the simplicity, straightness and frankness of a child astounded her beyond measure ; this prevailed upon her to return thanks to the Divine Beings for their mercy to Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva.

II

BOYHOOD

"The foolish disregard Me, when clad in human semblance, ignorant of My supreme nature, the great Lord of beings". (11) Gita, Ninth Discourse.

"He who knoweth Me, unborn, beginningless, the great Lord of the world, he, among mortals without delusion, is liberated from all sin." (3) Gita, Tenth Discourse.

After a due observance of the usual ceremonies the Boy entered upon the career of a student and was enrolled at the village school. There, inspite of His annoying fickleness and indulgence in pranks, and sports with His school-mates (which often became a source of harassment and trouble to them and to the master), He distinguished Himself as the most conspicuous Boy for His wonderfully tenacious memory, quickness of decision, promptness in answering all questions and skill in the acquisition of learning. Indeed, the captivating expression of His countenance coupled with His intrinsic worth rendered Him an Object of deep love and admiration alike to the teacher and the taught.

Now, it will, we believe, not be a departure from consistency and a systematic treatment of the subject, if, to the delineation of the foregoing incidents, we attach that of a scene which passed at Nandan Bagan in Calcutta on an occasion technically characterised by the Vaishnavas as *Haribasar* (the day of *Hari*, either the 11th or 12th lunar day of either fortnight). This holy day attracted a host of devout ladies to the aforesaid place ; they assembled there with the express desire for listening to the recital of *Srimad Bhagabatam* to be performed by the blessed Gourimani. She was a bit late in assuming her seat. The intervening time, however, did not prove to be a source of annoyance to the assembled ladies, inasmuch as they were feasting their eyes on the enchanting loveliness of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva's form, no less on the entertaining sports He was bent upon. Verily, the beauty of the form knew no match ; it was endowed with the hue and lustre of molten gold. Indeed, the countenance

of the Boy presented the charming look of the full moon. His nostrils did not yield in the elegance of shape to the flowers of the sesamum-plant. His ruby lips defied in colour a ripe *bimba* (a scarlet cucurbitaceous fruit which may be said to be the Indian Apple of Sodom) ; the rows of His pearly-white teeth had the beauty of the many-flowered jasmine. The profusion of His sable tresses, His throat marked with three lines like a conch, prominent, broad chest, shoulder like that of a bull, arms shaped like the trunk of a young elephant which reached down to the knees, fingers resembling unblown *champaka* flowers, prominent navel, thighs which had the shape of a large sort of plantain called '*Rama-rambha*', the sole of His feet which looked like the red lotus and the bright nails of His toes—all these constituted a combination of loveliness which was without a parallel. It presented an extremely attractive sight to whatever eyes were cast upon it.

Now, the lovely Child was occupied with such pastimes as the building of the images of *Kali*, *Durga* and so on and the performance of the *pujah* of the Deities. In the midst of these activities He suddenly assumed the form of *Srikrishna* to the amazement and admiration of the spectators. Indeed, when something quite unusual happens, people at first do not believe it. So the ladies attributed the wonderful sight to a defect in their eyes. This is why they rubbed them with the object of removing the imaginary defect. But the same form presented itself to their vision ! Great was their astonishment, while they saw the figure of *Srikrishna* instead of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva before them. In fact,

overwhelmed with wonder, they kept their eyes fixed on the earth-fascinating form. After a while, however, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva appeared before them as their beloved 'Gopal'.

This incident was followed by the return of Sj. Gourimani to Panihati. Here Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva one day was engaged in a play in the *Ganga* along with His play-mates. Just at that time a devout Vaishnava happened to step forth to the spot to draw a quantity of the holy water. This Vaishnava dwelt beside the sacred river in a hut ; and he was given to derive all his joy and comfort from constant participation in devotional exercises and performance of religious rites. Now, it is difficult to ascertain why, at the sight of Thakur, he was, to all appearance, subject to an accession of feelings ; these found vent through tears and a stirring speech that a noble Vaishnava usually addresses to Lord *Sri Sri Gouranga Deva* with deep devotion. He could not resist the impulse to draw near to Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva and hold His hallowed feet, with a profound reverence, to his bosom, nay he said, "Oh *Thief*, who hast captivated and stolen my heart ; where shouldst Thou go leaving me behind ?" Again, he felt prevailed upon to carry Him to his hut and place him most devoutly on a seat and entertain Him, in a spirit of deep humility, with a good cheer as far as he could. He then returned thanks to Him for the causeless mercy He had shown him in deigning to reveal His true Self to an insignificant creature like him and implored fervently its continuance. In response to his earnest solicitations, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva assured him of occasional visits. On the eve of His

departure, the noble soul made a profound obeisance to Him.

It behoves us to note here that, on another occasion, the nurse of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva felt very strongly inclined to entertain Him with articles of food that her circumstances would permit her to dress. But the obstacle her low caste should put in the way of the achievement of her purpose, compelled her to stifle her inclination. The desire, however, would at times prove too irresistible. Once at such a time Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva presented Himself to her hut. He then pressed her greatly to supply Him at once with what should appease the hunger which, as He said, then preyed upon Him. The nurse received Him with every token of love and cordiality ; but she was at a loss to see what to do under a circumstance so trying and confusing ; because the only article of food she could then extend to her beloved Gopal was rice. This she, an untouchable, was debarred from offering to the son of a Caste-Hindu. But the heavy pressure of the 'Boy' prevailed upon her to place before Him rice and a little potherb ; He evidently enjoyed them with great relish. He also thanked her for the entertainment.

Again, another devout Vaishnava too succeeded in attaining the mercy of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva at Panihati on the occasion of the holy Vaishnava festival known as '*Danda-mahotsava*' celebrated under the previously-mentioned holy Banyan tree beside the *Ganga*. The noble soul was stepping forth towards the tree with some delicacies in a *malsa* (a roundish sort of brimless hollow earthen pot) to be offered to Lord *Sri Sri Gouranga*.

Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva saw him and apparently felt tempted to partake of the food. So He rushed towards the *bhakta* and climbed upon his waist. The next step He took was to place His left foot on the fillet of thread that was tied round it (his waist) and to throw His left arm round his neck. This accomplished, He employed His right hand in making inroads upon the contents of the vessel. Notwithstanding the exhortations, chiding and vehement opposition of the *bhakta*, the Boy could not be prevented from swallowing hasty morsels of the good cheer till His desire was gratified. Great was the devotee's mortification, when his long-cherished hope of making an offering of the sweets was so sadly disappointed. He bewailed his lot as one of unspeakable wretchedness and laboured under the most agitating reflections. Meanwhile Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva who had appeared to the noble Vaishnava to be a naughty springal, stood giggling before the distressed soul after prosecuting His enterprise. But the gesture of despondency, and the attitude of resentment he had developed towards the Boy were immediately exchanged for those of hope and supreme devotion under the elevating influence of the holy association. Indeed, in a state of ecstasy, he now stretched out his arms to hold Him in a sweet embrace with the pronouncement, "Is This my Lord Gouranga ? Is this the Supreme Object to whom my thoughts are devoted ?" The utterance was followed by his absorption in trance. But alas ! when he came to himself, he was subject to agonising apprehensions concerning his luck, since it baffled, as he thought, the achievement of his union with the Supreme Lord, an opportunity for which had offered itself to him so miraculously !

On another occasion Sj. Gourimani exhorted, as was her wont, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva to assume a prescribed posture of sitting to be resorted to in time of meditation. She also enjoined Him then to mutter the Name of the Divine Mother. Scarcely had the operation continued a while, when He was lost in *savikalpa samadhi** to the surprise of Sj Anandamayee and an assembly of ladies who would often gather in her house to feast their eyes on the enchanting looks and beauty of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. Unaccustomed as they were to such mysterious achievements of spiritual characters, they changed colour under an agony of apprehension regarding Him. But when the normal state of mind was restored to the Mysterious Boy, all their terror for His impending fate passed away to make room for serious reflections about the ways of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, which defied all efforts for understanding them.

However, the death of Sj. Gourimani was followed by Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva's admission into the General Assembly Institution, Calcutta. Here He attracted the love and admiration of the then Principal by His intensely devout nature, wonderful sobriety, retiring temperament and remarkably amiable temper and winning manners. Indeed, the matchless loveliness of the Boy coupled with His rarely dutiful conduct rendered Him an Idol of his heart, as it were. So, during His absence from the class, the Principal would miss Him very much. This is why once, when Gopal did not appear in the class for

*The state of being partially (and not totally) absorbed in the Supreme—the state in which the consciousness of the distinction between the aspirant and the Object of worship still persists.

a long time even on the expiry of the tiffin period, the Principal was overwhelmed with intense anxiety concerning Him. Much time elapsed in this way. Then the Boy was found advancing at a slow pace towards the class. On seeing the Head of the Institution before Him, He saluted him.

This meeting was followed by an enquiry on the part of the Principal about His abnormal delay in attendance to the class. He made the reply that He had devoted Himself to meditation in one corner of the park. Then did He pass into a state which had rendered Him quite unconscious of the happenings of the outer world. The intimation delivered with a solemn air gave it the double weight ; it struck the Principal mute with amazement at the zenith of realization reached by one of His tender age. It extorted from Him the remark, "India is, undoubtedly, a land of religion. It is foolish on the part of missionaries to preach their creed in a country which has produced a Mysterious Boy like you !" Thenceforward he relinquished the vow of preaching Christianity in India.

Now, during the period of His education, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva entered upon a brilliant and promising career, no doubt. But circumstances thwarted His intention to prosecute His studies further. And so He held Himself obliged to put a stop to them at the age of thirteen or so. Meanwhile His uncle, Sj. Bhupan Mohan Babu, secured Him a Government service at Dacca. And He discharged His responsibilities very efficiently. And, within a very short time, His superior officer, who was a European, thought of promoting Him to a higher rank. However, time wore on smoothly with Him ; but once, in

the evening, as He was proceeding towards His residence with a large sum of money, He was waylaid by the most notorious and ferocious dacoit of the town. Then prevailed a well-contested duel between the two. But the strength and skill of the hooligan yielded to the terrible blows struck by Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva ; and he dropped down senseless into the drain beside the road.

The following morning he sought and obtained an interview with his *Victim* ; then did he examine His limbs so as to ascertain wherein lay the strength which had overpowered him. The limbs, however, were as lovely as they were soft. So the dacoit asked Him if He had thrashed him with an iron rod. The reply being negative, he was astonished beyond measure at the extraordinary power of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. And he could not resist the desire for binding himself to Him in the tie of friendship.

Indeed, the attainment of a lucrative post and the bright prospect of promotion to higher ranks with consequent increase in income can never become a source of attachment to the world in the case of One in whose very nature *viveka* (discrimination) and *vairagya* (dispassion) were ingrained. So, the life of servitude lost its charm for Him. And He left it aside and came back to Calcutta. This period was remarkable for His frequent visits to *Kali-temple*, where He would go on foot with tattered raiment from Ahiritolla. Once, however, He felt impelled to proceed towards Trikoneswar ghat at Kalighat. In those days it was a very secluded spot. It also served as a place of harbourage to many *Sadhus*, when they resumed their return journey after their sojourn at *Ganga-sagar*.

Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva took His seat on a step in the ghat and was charmed with the passive quiet of the atmosphere so congenial to deep meditation. Scarcely had He spent a few minutes in that posture of repose, when His gaze was arrested by the extraordinarily luminous form of an *Abadhuta* who remained absorbed in *samadhi* (concentration of the mind in abstract, profound divine meditation) hard by. He was none else than Paramahamsacharya Sri Srimat Abadhuta Brahmananda Deva about whom we have already spoken in the Introductory.

When the Paramahamsacharya came to Himself, His eyes glanced upon Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. He felt attracted to the Young Man of captivating looks and developed an attitude of filial love towards Him. He then could not resist the impulse to invite the Lovely Youth to go to Him after finishing His ablution in the holy waters of the *Ganga*. This happy contact was followed by Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva's initiation into *sannyasa* by the Paramahamsacharya who conferred upon Him the name of Sri Srimat Swami Jnanananda Abadhuta. He also intimated that He was the youngest of the four Sannyasin-disciples He had.

This incident was attended with a remarkable change in the conduct and behaviour of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. Abstinence and rigidity now became very prominent features of His character. He also developed a stronger leaning for solitude and sequestration. He would often remain confined in His room in a state of *samadhi*, regardless of the demands of nature.

However, some of His kindred enjoyed the blessed privilege of keeping an eye on His conduct day and

night. And in the course of the talks they would hold regarding the same, it transpired that night-time, which entices even the most vigorous and diligent worker to bed and overpowers him with sleep, was to Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva no period of repose. He would be found even then remaining absorbed in *samadhi* in a posture of sitting on a holy seat. His room would often be illuminated with brilliant rays of different colours, when a light from heaven seemed to visit it with all its effulgence. Thus did Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva enter upon the holy career of *sannyasa* which was destined to be marked with the most wonderful achievements.

"We've no abiding city here,
Then let us live as pilgrims do ;
Let not the world our rest appear,
But let us haste from all below."

III

WANDERINGS AND PILGRIMAGE

"For if I mingled not ever in action unwearied, men all around would follow My path, O son of Pritha." (23)
Gita, Third Discourse.

"We've no abiding city here,
This may distress the worldling's mind,
But should not cost the saint a tear,
Who hopes a better rest to find."

The adoption of the life of renunciation on the part of the Yogacharya paved the way for His travels through the length and breadth of India. Indeed, there was scarcely any holy place which was not blessed with His visit. He, however, felt precluded from paying His visit to Puri in accordance with the suggestion of His grandmother. She had been solemnly warned by a great man against allowing Him to go forth to the holy place, inasmuch as His association with Lord *Jagannath* would be followed, as he said, by fatal consequences. However, the resort to *sannyasa* rendered the Yogacharya quite indifferent to His relations and friends and all worldly affairs. His countenance bore henceforth all marks of perfect self-abnegation and habit indicated thorough contempt of attachment for the world. He moved about in the pose of an ever-liberated, Self-pleased man totally absorbed in deep contemplation on the Supreme. A dirty, torn, small piece of cloth served all purposes of body-clothing. Ignorant men ascribed this change in His composition to mental derangement ; but to His devoted adherents He appeared to be their *Ishta Devata* (Chosen and Favourite Deity), and men of enlightened vision and God-realization revered Him as the Supreme *Brahman* (Eternal Being). Regardless of all the warnings and threats of His nearest ones, who had not been acquainted with the fact of his adoption of *sannyasa*, He totally departed from the path they urged him to tread. They were oppressed with an intense agony of mind, when they found His lovely, handsome body stained with dust and beautiful hair, in a state of disorder. But they were not aware that to the ever-liberated Gopal cold and heat,

pleasure and pain, fame and ignominy and praise and reproach were all one or rather nothing.

Indeed, one dark night Guru Jnanananda Deva set forth on foot on pilgrimage. At first He set forward towards *Kali's* temple at Kalighat, Calcutta. As it was midnight, the doors to the temple were closed ; but His arrival there was followed by a dance of the Divine Mother's companions round about Him. Meanwhile one Srimat Swami Bimalananda Teertha presented himself to the spot. His appearance caused the disappearance of the super-earthly beings. Association with the *Guru* awakened in the Swamiji a consciousness of His greatness ; and overwhelmed with high emotions of supreme devotion, he prostrated himself at the revered feet of the *Guru* and burst into tears. However, the sweet words of consolation addressed by Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva charmed down his agitation of mind and he took a devout farewell of the Abadhuta. The Yogacharya quenched His thirst there with the water of the adjoining holy pond and took His stand beside it, when a splendid, vast Form of Goddess *Kali* revealed Itself before Him. It was decked in all sorts of ornaments. Its head reached up to the sky. The Mother uttered a roar of laughter which kept the circle of the heaven reverberating. At this sight tears rolled down His eyes ; He was thrilled with intense delight and as a result, the hair of His body stood erect ; He was also affected with tremor, perspiration, change of colour and so on—signs which manifest themselves in the person of a great soul, when he is overwhelmed with an accession of the pure feelings of supreme devotion. These paved the way for His absorption in *samadhi*. When, however, the normal state of mind was restored to

Him, He found the lingering remnants of the night scared away by the light of the dawn. He now resumed His journey and proceeded on foot towards the south. The Yogacharya now set the lofty ideal of *vairagya* (freedom from passion or worldly attachment, or dispassion) not only by His habit and attitude but also by His puritanic abstinence from even the simple articles of food daily used by the poorest Bengali for the upkeep of his health. Indeed, He subsisted on herbs, leaves and roots (of trees and plants), the clay of ponds, and the juice of grass and leaves and scarcely used any vessel for drinking water ; the hollow made by joining the hands together served the purpose. His wanderings through the south were marked by some unusual incidents. Verily, these brought about His meetings with *Vibhishana*, *Asvatthama*, *Hanuman*, *Narada*, *Vedavyasa* and other great Souls who usually remain invisible to people. In the course of His journey He found Himself on the bank of the Sipra where He came across a *Sadhu* distinguished as belonging to the *Aghora-sect* and often represented as a fanatic worshipper of *Shiva* (given to eat dirt and other filthy matters) and also as making no difference between good things and bad. He invited the Yogacharya to partake of the human flesh he was eating. The Latter declined to accept his invitation with the remark, "That is intended for your use. I am destined to partake of *halua* (a kind of pudding made with coarse flour, ghee and sugar) and *puri* (a kind of wheaten cake)." Such a remark was worthy of One who, being the very Embodiment of purity, was given to censure the departure from strict loyalty to the established customs and rules of conduct enjoined by the scriptures. However,

the above-mentioned *Sadhu* was highly incensed at the Yogacharya's remark and threatened to strike on Him a blow by means of his tongs. At this Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva took to heels and sought shelter in the temple of *Mahakala* to escape his fury. This event was followed by His visits to the various sacred places in southern and western India and the impervious regions of the Himalayas. Here he met with *Kasyapa*, *Attri*, *Vasistha* and others known as the seven Sages, who worshipped Him with deep devotion. At last He appeared on the bank of the *Gouri Kundu*.

Now, a Bengali gentleman known as Sj. Rashik Chandra Chakrabartty, who belonged to the village of Jhinaidaha in the district of Jessore (Bengal), once visited various sacred places along with a great man. He was still in the prime of life ; but owing to his deep devotion to God, he denied himself of all the pleasures and comforts of the worldly life and betook himself to the life of a pilgrim. In his way to *Kedarnath* he arrived at *Gouri Kundu*. His companion advised him to wait there for a time, since his supreme object would be achieved on the lapse of a few days ; his *Ishta Devata* would then appear there. Time wore on ; but being still unable to find his Desired Object, he gave way to despondency and despair, when Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva revealed Himself to the blessed Rashik in the luminous form of *Sri Krishna*. Then evidently for quieting the high emotions which swelled the bosom of the devotee, the Yogacharya stood before Rashik Babu in His usual attitude. He then communicated to him (Rashik Babu) His intention to go back to Bengal in no time. He further told him (Rashik Babu) that he was

destined to meet the Yogacharya on two occasions more in future ; it was, however, advisable that Rashik Babu should resume his homeward journey. The injunction subjected Rashik Babu to agitating reflections, inasmuch as he was then quite hard up. Aware of the subject of his anxiety, the Yogacharya bade him take plunge into the *Gouri Kundu* with all his bags and baggages. The devotee yielded implicit obedience to the order of the *Guru*. And, to his infinite surprise, he could manage, by the inscrutable grace and providence of the Yogacharya, to reach the well-known *Dasasvamedha* ghat in the *Ganga* in the holy city of Benares by crossing over the abnormally long distance from the Himalayan region in the twinkling of an eye. Such an unpremeditated and mysterious event occurring so miraculously, excited in the devotee's heart high feelings of joy and admiration. And he could not suppress the irresistible impulse to bow repeatedly with profound reverence to the revered feet of the *Guru* in an attitude of deep humility, since he ascribed to Him and Him alone such a miracle. He went on thinking deeply on the Yogacharya's causeless, infinite mercy to an humble self like him. And the more he thought the more he became overwhelmed with emotions. However, with his mind exclusively occupied with the thoughts he proceeded to the residence of a relative. There is another fact intimately associated with the Yogacharya's career as a wanderer ; it deserves a tribute of consideration ; a great many aspirants resigned themselves to His mercy for the achievement of the supreme end of human life. He initiated them in the disciplines of *sannyasa* (renuncia-

tion of the world). Most of them withdrew themselves for ever from the haunts of their fellow-beings and betook themselves to the seclusion of woodland life—seclusion that is congenial to deep contemplation.

Indeed, the career of the Yogacharya would have literally remained a sealed book even to those who were often accorded the blessed privilege and favour of close association with Him, had He not occasionally condescended to deal with some details about it in their presence (or indited them privately in some scraps of paper left behind). These have flown from mouth to mouth or been recorded by some devotees ; and hence it has been possible for us to collect them from various quarters. But it goes without saying that a great many incidents suggestive of His infinite spiritual wealth and Lordly powers, were locked in His heart, since He was given to conceal them or take offence, if any body sought to disclose in His presence to others the truths concerning His achievements, glory and greatness.

The termination of His pilgrimage was followed by His return to the holy city of Benares where the Yogacharya consigned Himself to seclusion in a solitary room and devoted Himself to the practice of *yoga*. It was a period of severe austerity. Some devoted adherents would provide Him with food and drink, no doubt ; but regardless of those bare necessities of daily life, He would often remain absorbed in *Nirvikalpa samadhi* (contemplation in which there is no distinction recognised between subject and Object) and pass even ten or twelve consecutive days in that state of total absorption in profound, abstract, divine meditation. It is said that, although Lord *Shiva*:

was the Deity that would almost always appear before Him in those days. He found Lord Ganesh manifesting Himself in a hundred and fiftythree Forms in His room. Besides, this period of His residence in Benares was occupied with the study of the scriptures including one hundred and ninety four *Tantras* and even of the Sanskrit Grammar entitled *Kalap Vyakaran*. Although He had here the opportunity of securing rich dishes and delicacies, He did not, as already indicated, forego the practice of abstinence, inasmuch as He subsisted on simple fare, such as rice or milk or myrobalan or the juice of grass. His ways were mysterious. Indeed, why should One, who became absorbed in *nirvvikalpa samadhi* in His very childhood and deserved a profound reverence from His grandmother by muttering into her ear the *mantra* (mystical formulæ) regarding her *Ishta Devata*, be under the necessity of practising *yoga* and austerity, which are usually resorted to by aspirants for the achievement of the supreme end of human life ?

Now, Sj. Anandamayee, His grandmother, in whose house He took up his residence, was quite in the dark about His adoption of the life of supreme renunciation. So, impelled by an irresistible desire for seeing her beloved Grandson wedded to a very beautiful girl chosen for the purpose, she invited the relatives of the bride to her house. In the meantime she had the Yogacharya decked in very costly, splendid raiment inspite of His opposition and kept Him ready for their observation. But He fashioned the garments into a helmet and wrapped His head up in them. Having thus disrobed Himself, He took His seat in a faintly-lighted room and sat naked

like the Chief of the contemplative saints. The sight of the naked bridegroom elicited from the observers the remark, "Is this a mad-cap ?" The Yogacharya said, "Yea !" This served to wound the feelings of the visitors and offend their sense of decency. And so they went back disappointed.

Again, her long-cherished hope being thus frustrated, Sj. Anandamayee pressed her Grandson no more for marriage. It was at such a time that the Yogacharya once paid His visit to Madhab Seth's garden, where some guests were being entertained. They were performing the recital of Lord Samkaracharya's "*Vivekachudamani*" and proved that everything else besides the *Vedanta* is false. At this Guru Jnanananda Deva observed, "A man who discusses a religious subject only by means of his book-learning, fails to deal adequately with what lies beyond his comprehension." Just then He thought how "*laya*" (the merging of the individual soul in the Supreme Self) is achieved ; and as soon as He thought of it the world appeared to be suddenly enveloped in fog which rendered every thing invisible ; nay the earth seemed to totter and quake and the Yogacharya became absorbed in *samadhi* in no time. Two or three days passed till His normal state of mind was restored to Him. This afforded the observers the opportunity to wait upon and serve Him, nay they even worshipped Him as Lord *Samkaracharya* with deep devotion.

IV

VISIT TO CALCUTTA AFTER PILGRIMAGE

"Since I excel the destructible, and am more excellent also than the indestructible, in the world and in the Veda I am proclaimed the Supreme Spirit." (18)

"He who undeluded knoweth Me thus as the Supreme spirit, he, all-knowing, worshippeth Me with his whole being, O Bharata." (19) Gita, Fifteenth Discourse.

The Yogacharya resided in the holy city of Benares for a time, when He set forth towards Calcutta. Here He was cordially invited by relatives and friends, such as Sreejut Ramchandra Dutt, Sreejut Manmohan Mitter, Sreejut Raja Narendra Krishna Deva Bahadur, the father-in-law of His maternal uncle, to take up His residence in their respective houses. Although He did not decline to accede to their request, He would mostly live far removed from association with men in the *Nimtalla ghat*, *Ratan Babu's ghat* at Cossipur, the crematoriums at Nimtalla and Keoratolla and under the Baghbazar and Howrah bridges. Thus would He pass the winter, the summer and the rains with His body quite ill-protected against the fury of the seasons. During His residence beside the *Ganga*, He would become so much absorbed in deep contemplation that He would not be aware, even when, during the flood-tide, the river would flow over Him with a terrific and tremendous force. He would, however, be visible, when the waters would recede. It goes without saying that His body

would remain stained with mud and dirt as a result of the tyranny of the flood-tide. At times He would be found sitting in this condition by the distinguished confectioner of Baghbazar known as Sj. Nabin Maira. He would wash and cleanse, with great care, the holy body of the Abadhuta and request Him most earnestly to condescend to set His holy foot on the floor of his shop. Aware of His sincerity of purpose and profound reverence, Guru Jnanananda Deva would not decline to grant his prayer. Thus would Sj. Nabin Maira find an opportunity to entertain Him with a quantity of warm milk. In this way Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva would sometimes allow Himself to be waited upon and served by devout souls.

This period of His life was remarkable, also because He would often come across many Gods and Goddesses. Besides, whenever He called to mind any object, it would at once present itself to Him. On one occasion He was sitting at midnight in one corner of the crematorium at Nimtolla, when He found that a great many hideous-looking, terrible ghosts were moving about. Meanwhile there arose, all on a sudden, from within the flames of a distant funeral pyre, the Divine Mother, *Kali*, the roar of Whose laughter kept the atmosphere reverberating. The effulgence that streamed forth from Her body and the thick locks of Her hair illuminated the crematorium. The sight of the wonderful form of Goddess *Shyama* excited in the Abadhuta's heart high emotions of supreme devotion with the accompanying signs being manifested in His body ; and by and by He became absorbed in *samadhi*. It was long ere He came to His senses. Even now tears were trickling down incessantly from His eyes that had reddened under

the influence of ecstasy. Besides, the lovely, radiant expression of His countenance suggested that He had just come down from a region far beyond this world.

Verily, inspite of His infinite spiritual wealth and endless powers, the Abadhuta wore the mask of an ordinary individual. So, even the penetrating gaze of a man of keen insight was baffled in its effort for seeing into His true Self. This was due to their ignorance of the characteristic traits and conduct of a true Abadhuta. And so, being unable to realize why He would remain so abstract-minded, they would mistake Him for a lunatic and term Him thus. In fact, they were not to blame for this; since, inspite of His inherent purity of being and supreme excellence, He would not often observe the injunctions of the scriptures regarding the washing of the posteriors after evacuation, purification by ablution, the rinsing of the mouth and so on. Again, notwithstanding His supreme discrimination and wisdom and power of eloquence, He would conduct Himself like an ignorant man and scarcely open His lips.

In short, from His conduct and behaviour which were apparently tinctured with strange inconsistencies, none could realize whether He was the Lord or a devotee, an *Abadhuta* or an aspirant, a lover or a renouncer of the world, a *Sakta* or a *Vaishnava* or one belonging to some other sect, a genius or a lunatic, a believer in the existence of God or an atheist.

While Abadhuta Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was thus passing His days in the city of Calcutta, Sj. Ramchandra Dutt, Sj. Manmohan Mitter and some other noble souls,

attracted by the greatness and superhuman powers of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa Deva, developed supreme, devoted attachment for Him. And so, they would often repair to Dakshineswar to pay their respects to Him. They also felt strongly inclined to create in the Abadhuta a profound reverence for the Paramahamsa. This is why they would recite before the Yogacharya the inspiring teachings of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva. Guru Jnanananda Deva, however, inspite of His knowledge of the greatness of the Self-pleased Man, would draw a veil over it, pretend ignorance and refute His viewpoints with counter-arguments ; He would also observe that during His pilgrimage He had come across many Paramahamsas* and hence had no desire for seeing more. These remarks of

* A *Paramahamsa* is represented as 'an ascetic of the first rank who has subdued all his passions, desires and so on by the achievement of the knowledge of the Eternal; Supreme *Brahman*' 'He who reaches the status of a *Paramahamsa*, has neither to enjoy nor suffer the consequences of actions, performed by him. He acquires, as a result of his attainment of the consciousness of non-duality i.e. his unity with the Supreme, Perpetual Being, the competency for performing all works quite unaffected. So he is regarded as a non-performer of actions in spite of his performing them. He, indeed, who has reached divine wisdom and divine knowledge, is a *Paramahamsa* ; nothing remains unknown and unrevealed to him. He is quite free from affection or passion and remains indifferent or unconcerned in all conditions. He has no need or craving for wealth and contents himself with whatever comes unsolicited. He has been totally freed from both good and evil thoughts, nay all cares and anxieties. He has reached liberation during his life-time and eternal bliss. He is quite averse to all worldly objects, pleasures and enjoyments and unperturbed at heart. He has not even the slightest desire even for association with a

the Yogacharya would cut the devotees to the quick and they would say that He should be brought into close touch with Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva. At this He would leave the place with a smile.

Once, however, the importunities of the devotees prevailed upon Him to go forth to Dakshineswar along with them. They requested Him most earnestly not to argue with Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva. He agreed to accede to their request. This gave them much pleasure. After their arrival at Rani Rashmani's *Kali*-temple, they introduced Him with respectful ceremony to Sri Sri

beautiful, young woman and so he is a *Mahapurusha* (Great Man). He is not harmed and affected in the least even if he be placed in the midst of young women. (Indeed, Sri Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa Deva was never, nay could never be harmed although His youthful wife was given to massage His holy feet). In fact, bondage is at the root of extreme disquiet (or absence of peace or tranquillity), and liberation is the mother of supreme peace. A real *Paramahamsa* is, as already indicated, liberated during his life-time. This is why he knows none (or has transcended all) of the snares (or bondages) in which a *jeeva* (or individual) is or remains entangled. This is why he is neither dependent nor independent. He, who is neither afraid of nor ashamed of nor entertains the least fear of the loss of prestige in expressing all his thoughts and sentiments and feelings, is not an ordinary man. He is a *Paramahamsa*. One cannot attain childishness or boyishness (or boyish nature or character) in youth without becoming a *Paramahamsa*. A *Paramahamsa* has had all his hopes removed or abandoned or shaken off. He is or remains, as already stated, quite unaffected, and attached to nothing. He can (or has the power to) do at anytime and every time whatever he pleases. The injunctions and prohibitions of the scriptures are all like his servants. He is full of bliss and knows no sorrow.'

Ramkrishna Deva. Just at that time there prevailed a tumult outside. It violently disturbed the tranquil atmosphere of the place. It also enticed the devotees outside. But that was not the case with Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. He remained sitting quite unconcernedly and unaffected by the turmoil. At this the Paramahamsa enquired of the Abadhuta why He had not gone out. The Abadhuta, who still remained abstract-minded, replied indifferently, "When human contrivance fails to quiet the tumult within, what's the use of attending to the discord outside ? Householders are often given to indulge in it." The Paramahamsa was mightily surprised at this reply and kept gazing at the Abadhuta. The simple pronouncement conveyed to Him an idea about the Yogacharya. So, when, after a while, the previously-mentioned devotees came back. He said in joy, "Nitya is like a mango of a deceptive colour which, though green to all appearance, is ripe within." This communication astounded the devotees beyond measure and elicited from them the remark, "Is He so Great ? We were quite in the dark about it !" At this the Paramahamsa* said, "You will realize afterwards how

* *Bhagawan* Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, too, has highly complimented, in His writings, the glory of *Bhagawan* Sri Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa Deva by representing the Latter as the 'Mahapurusha' (Great Man) of Dakshineswar and also by remarking, "To see Paramahamsa *Mahasaya* (the Magnanimous Paramahamsa) is to see the *Sachchidananda* (the Supreme *Brahman* or Eternal Being known as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Eternal)" and so on. Space does not allow us to insert here an English rendering of all the pronouncements of Thakur with respect to the greatness of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva. But the foregoing words are quite rich in suggestiveness, inasmuch as they will, we believe, serve to convey to the reader a definite idea as to how Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva has been appreciated by Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva.

Great He is." Then He entertained with His own hands Guru Jnanananda Deva with sweets. While this was going on, Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva became thrilled with overwhelming, high feelings of love not unmixed with joy. This first meeting was a very happy one. The calm look and superhuman beauty and loveliness of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva made such an impression on the mind of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva and proved so attractive to Him that He felt prevailed upon to ask devotee Ramchandra to bring Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva to Dakshineswar in future.

This event was followed by repeated meetings between the two Great Ones. Once, in the course of His conversation with His devotees, Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva said, "Nitya's position in the realm of righteousness is unique, inasmuch as He renounced the world even before being bound to the yoke of marriage. He is without a second."

On another occasion the devotees took Guru Jnanananda Deva with them to Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva when the Latter had finished His dinner. He then fed the Former *paramanna prasad* (rice boiled with milk and sugar that has been offered to God) with His own hand. The time for His noon-day repose having arrived, the visitors were recommended to withdraw. They utilized the time allotted to them in the performance of devotional duties. Meanwhile Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva squatted on the ground in a secluded place and passed into ecstasy and was lost in Self-bliss. And it was not long ere He became totally absorbed in *samadhi*. On the termination of their meditation, the devotees drew near to the

Abadhuta. But when, even after the lapse of a pretty long time, they found Him still sitting unconscious of the happenings of the external world, they lost their patience and carried Him on their shoulders to the apartment of the Paramahamsa. Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva became thrilled with joy at the sight ; and as soon as He touched Guru Jnanananda Deva He, too, reached that blessed state of unconsciousness. After a while Their abstract meditation was at an end, no doubt ; but They were still in a state of ecstatic joy. Now there prevailed between the Two a parley in a language that was quite unintelligible to the listening ears. They passed some time in this way. But it was remarkable, indeed, that even when the Paramahamsa came to His senses, the Abadhuta remained in the ecstatic state. This state of things elicited from some of the assembled devotees the remark, "It was under the influence of the observation of Your form, and Your grace that He (Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva) became absorbed in deep contemplation." At this Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva said with a solemn warning, "Oh ! what a nasty idea is this ! Fie ! Fie ! Never indulge in such a remark ! Indeed, He (Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva) is Ever-perfect ; He is *Sambhu-Siva* ; He is *Swayambhu* (an epithet of *Brahma*). Nitya neither requires nor awaits any body's grace."

Scarcely had the above dialogue ceased, when Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was again totally lost in *samadhi*. Now did the Paramahamsa throw his arms round the Abadhuta's neck and was beside Himself with joy and said, "Nitya is *Samkar* (an epithet of *Siva*) ; Nitya is a *Paramahamsa*, Nitya is an *Abadhuta*. It is possible for none but Nitya

to keep his cloth bound to His waist even in this state." It goes without saying that Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva would often lose His control over His robe in a state of religious ecstasy. In the course of the conversation He said, "Nitya is now quite abstract-minded (*unmana*)."
This communication urged the assembled devotees to observe, "Is He so advanced ? We were quite in the dark about it !" Then the Paramahamsa said smiling, "He will no more be able to keep His true Self shrouded in the mask ; it will soon drop off."

Now, seeing the dusk about to close upon them, the devotees grew naturally anxious for setting forth towards Calcutta. But Sri Sri Nitya Deva having not yet regained His consciousness, they were prevented from doing so. They thought it quite unfair to leave Him there in that state. So, finding no other alternative, they carried Him on their shoulders to the boat. Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva offered for His use a quantity of butter, crystallised sugar and some oranges and other delicacies. Then, when, after some time, Sri Sri Nitya Deva came to His senses, the devotees entertained Him with them and partook of what remained after His entertainment.

Naturally given to conceal His Lordly powers, the Yogacharya would take offence, if any body referred to them in His presence. So, one day He burst into tears and fell acrying like a child, when Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva told some devotees about the subject. At this Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva felt much ashamed and confused and said, "I can say nothing more about the latter ; if I dwell upon the subject further, it will be

followed by terrible consequences, inasmuch as Nitya will renounce His body." Thus was the Paramahamsa baffled in his efforts for revealing or disclosing His true Self.

On another occasion Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva said to devotee Ramchandra Dutt, "As Nitya has been quite easily available to thee, thou failest to realize what a Supreme Object lodges under thy roof. Indeed, the *Rani* (*Yasoda*) beat with the broom (i.e. slighted) Him (*Srikrishna*) whom the sage cannot reach by resorting to deep meditation. Nitya is *Narayan*. Serve Him as such." Thenceforward the devotee, who would yield implicit obedience to the Paramahamsa, began to wait upon and serve the Yogacharya with great care.

It has already been said that during this period Sri Sri Nitya Deva would always remain absorbed in meditation on God. This served to deprive Him of the perception of external objects. So, when once, at the invitation of Sj. Balaram Basu of Baghbazar, He set forth towards his place, He failed to hold on the right path. This prevented Him from reaching the destination in the right time. He was too late. In the way, however, He felt attracted to a religious song that was being sung in a church and listened to it with more than ordinary degree of interest. He was observed in this condition by a Hindu pedestrian who felt tempted to ask Him, "Are you a Christian?" Guru Jnanananda Deva replied, "Outwardly I am not a Christian; but I have perfect faith in the creed."

However, the Yogacharya's delay in attendance to his house became a source of intense anxiety to Sj..

Balaram Babu. He was very sorry to see Him arrived before the evening and set himself in right earnest the task of entertaining Him, with great care, with rich articles of food dressed in various modes. They were arranged separately in order that Sri Sri Nitya Deva might enjoy the delicacies one after another. Now, it should be noted that Guru Jnanananda Deva was a great Synthesiser not only with regard to the view-points of different sects and communities but also with respect to the things and events that concerned His everyday life on earth. This is why, to the utter surprise of Sj. Balaram Babu, He mixed together all the articles of food, sweet and salted, and partook of these with great relish. But the host was not at all satisfied with this. So he invited Sri Sri Nitya Deva to dine there kindly on another occasion. Every care was taken to make the dinner acceptable in all respects. To gratify the sentiments of Sj. Balaram Babu the Yogacharya that day began to partake of the different articles of food separately, when the host's dog, in the teeth of every opposition, forced its way to where the Great One was feasting. It readily employed itself in sharing the delicacies with the Honoured Guest. This served to wound the feelings of Sj. Balaram Babu. And highly incensed at the insolent conduct of the dog, he threatened to belabour it. But Guru Jnanananda Deva, who looked equally on a Brahmana adorned with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant and even a dog and an outcaste, resisted the indignant owner of the innocent creature and enjoyed the feast along with it. And it was not long ere He became absorbed in the consciousness of non-duality. The observers stationed

there were struck dumb at the amazing behaviour of the Guru.

Time thus wore on, when one day the Yogacharya set forth towards and reached Dakshineswar in an ecstatic state. In that state he made His way to each of the temples of *Shiva* there and began to *lock up in a fast embrace* each Phallic Emblem of *Shiva* (*Shivalinga*) and remained in that posture for a while. This set Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva thinking that His exit in that condition might prove injurious to Him, inasmuch as He might stagger and fall down. So, as soon as He entered into another temple, Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva kept the entrance under lock and key. After some time, however, the Yogacharya came to His senses. He then felt inclined to go out of the temple. As He willed, the wall in the western side split in the middle. And He descended with a bound and went away. But it is amazing, indeed, that the split at once got mended of itself. And there was nothing in the affected part of the wall to suggest that it had suffered the damage. However, after some time Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva went forth to the temple and opened the door to see that the *Captive* had deceived the *Captor*. Hence the Omniscient Paramahamsa realized that all efforts for intercepting the will of the Almighty Nityagopal must be frustrated.

It has already been indicated that Guru Jnanananda Deva would always remain overwhelmed with the high feelings of supreme love. Devotee Narendra Nath (Srimat Swami Vivekananda) had been marking this. So, once he felt prevailed upon to say to Sri Sri Paramahamsa

Deva, "Nitya Babu*" appears to be a great lover of God. He is most probably a supreme devotee and lacks wisdom." At this Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva solemnly warned the devotee not to cherish such a wrong notion about the Yogacharya, saying thrice, "Nitya is not a man of wisdom but the very Incarnation of wisdom." Sj. Narendra Babu was evidently under the impression in those days that those who remained dissolved into ecstasies owing to their supreme love, had no idea about wisdom. However, the remarks of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva disillusioned him.

When there prevailed so much intimacy between Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva and Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, a gentleman of a very religious temperament would go forth to Dakshineswar to pay his respects to the Former. He was known as Sj. Kedar Nath Chatterji and had once been a devoted member of the Brahmo Samaj ; but he had recently withdrawn his allegiance from the Association and revived his attachment for his own faith. Once, during his residence at Allahabad, he fell a victim to an evil design and then went so far as to think of committing suicide. To this end he was about to embark upon a course of action that was sure to occasion his falling down from the peak of a mountain, when a very Comely Boy of a dark but luminous skin resisted him from his back side from the evil purpose. The mysterious Saviour of his life communicated to him words of assurance that Sj. Kedar Chatterji would be able to see Him again in Bengal.

* Few of Thakur's contemporaries were familiar with the fact that He had adopted privately the life of renunciation. And so He would be usually called 'Nitya Babu' or 'Shenjo (third) Babu.' His father gave Him this (latter) *pet-name*.

However, after his return to Bengal, Sj. Kedar Nath developed a profound reverence for Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva and would often pay his visits to Dakshineswar. It was here that the noble soul came across Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, and it was not long ere he realized that the same Supreme Being, As had appeared before him as a Dark-skinned Boy of a lovely, bright countenance, now assumed the splendid hue of molten gold. However, the devotee put on the needful restraint and locked the secret about the Yogacharya's miraculous achievement in the inmost recess of his heart, knowing full well that Sri Sri Nitya Deva would feel disturbed and offended, if he disclosed it. But henceforward he would term the Yogacharya "*Chhota Thakur*" (the younger Brother, *Sri Krishna*) and the Paramahamsa "*Bara Thakur*" (the Elder Brother, *Sri Balaram*).

However, once, while roaming about in the usual state of ecstasy, Sri Sri Nitya Deva felt inclined at noon to go forth to Dakshineswar and took the path to the holy place. But suddenly He became so much overwhelmed with high emotions that He lost the way and kept on seeking in vain the right path till the afternoon and at last felt very tired. Now, seeing the distress that preyed on the Yogacharya, Goddess *Kali* appeared in the luminous form of a girl. The effulgence that streamed forth from Her Body illuminated all the quarters. The sight affected Guru Jnanananda Deva much more deeply. Indeed, He became overpowered not only with joy but also with the feelings that agitate a child when he comes across his mother ; and hence He sought with the utmost eagerness to throw His arms

round the Goddess in the same attitude. The Divine Mother, however, indulged in a play with Him, inasmuch as the more He tried to reach Her the more She avoided His embrace and moved back with rapid strides to Dakshineswar. And when the Yogacharya got to the desired destination, She vanished. Now, He felt as much aggrieved as a child feels when he loses his mother. In this state He met with Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva. Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva was then taking His afternoon meal and, seeing the Abadhuta bathed in sweat, He bade a devotee fan Him (Sri Sri Nitya Deva). When His weariness was, to some extent, removed, Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva began to feed Him with His own hand. And it was not long ere He (the Paramahamsa) pronounced "*Hangsa*", "*Hangsa*,"* and became thrilled

*"He who, after abandoning (or renouncing or denying himself of) sons (or children), wife, home and so on, is devoted to the observance of the practices requisite in reaching union with the Supreme (*Brahman-Self*), who has brought under his control his heart, mental operations (or faculties) reasoning faculty, egotism, senses, and mind, is, indeed, spoken of as a *Hangsa*. A *Hangsa* should have his body dried up (or emaciated) by observing *chandrayana* (a particular expiatory penance or a religious vow (or observance) regulated by the moon's age and performed with great difficulty), *tulapurusha* (the ceremony of giving away in charity gold and other valuables equal to the donor's weight) or other vows for reaching the status of the Supreme, Eternal *Brahman* (or realizing the *Brahman-Self*). He should suffer nothing else except the holy thread, the mendicant's staff and a piece of cloth for sweeping (or beating) off worms and insects from the body, to remain with him....." The term "*Hangsa*" also means "*Shiva*," "*Vishnu*," the "Supreme Spirit," and "Eternal *Brahman*."

with ecstatic joy. To the enlightened vision of the Great One, Sri Sri Nitya Deva appeared to be *Hangsa* (an ascetic without desire or Lord *Shiva*) and He (Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva) disclosed this fact to the assembled devotees.

On another occasion a great many devotees assembled in the house of Sj. Ramchandra Dutt to participate in the celebration of *Puspadola*. At the invitation of the devotee Sri Sri Nitya Deva and Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva, too, presented Themselves to his residence. By and by the other devotees began to sing inspiring songs in praise of the play of *Sri Sri Radha-Krishna*. The two Great Ones were listening and listening and it was not long ere They commenced an ecstatic dance owing to the overpowering accession of divine emotions. The sight stirred the observers to the depth of their being. Much time elapsed in this way, when Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva took His stand in the court-yard and kept on observing the enchanting dance and beauty of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. Then, agitated with emotions, Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva pointed to the Yogacharya and cried out, "See there One who has been bound in the bond of *Sri Radha's* love". This pronouncement of the Omniscient Paramahamsa was immediately followed by a loud cry on the Name of *Hari*, that arose from the august assembly. But the apprehension that His true Self might be revealed to the vast gathering of devotees prevailed upon Sri Sri Nitya Deva to take to heels. This was not the first time that Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva's efforts for familiarising the devotees with the truth about the glory and supremacy of Sri Sri Abadhuta Deva were

frustrated. He availed Himself of another opportunity too in the house of Sj. Balaram Babu to enlighten them on His greatness by terming Him (Sri Sri Nitya Deva) in a loud voice '*Chaitanya*', when He appeared to Him (Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva) to be so. But these solemn utterances of the Great One failed to produce the desired effect on the minds of His adherents, inasmuch as the true Self of the Yogacharya remained veiled in mystery to them. This is a wonderful achievement (or play) of the Yogacharya. Indeed, His appearance and career on earth were such mysterious events as defied all efforts for scrutiny.

"Blessed be the Father and His love,
To whose celestial source we owe
Rivers of endless joys above,
And rills of comfort below."

While the drama of various incidents of the glorious career of the Yogacharya was being enacted in some parts of Calcutta and the suburbs, there flourished a noble soul, named Sreejut Bijoy Krishna Goswami, who hailed from Santipur, Dt. Nadia (Bengal); he belonged to the distinguished Brahman Goswami family that claimed their descent from *Prabhu Advaita*, a devoted follower of Sri Sri Chaitanya Deva of Nadia. His religious life was at one time terribly shaken by a violent storm of misgiving and inward questionings as to the truth of the faith clung firmly to by his forefathers. And hence he went so far as to withdraw his loyalty from their creed and tender his allegiance to the Brahmo Samaj. His extreme devotion to the cause recently espoused

by him secured a genius like him the preceptorship of the renowned Institution in no time.

Now, the Yogacharya, who realized the ideal unity of the apparently conflicting views of different sects and communities, would often present Himself to the Brahmo Samaj in order to attend to the religious functions magnificently discharged there through prayers, the recital of sacred texts and so on. Once, however, it so chanced that Sreejut Bijoy Krishna Goswami conducted the functions and delivered a speech. In the course of the address he dealt scornfully with, nay condemned ruthlessly and vehemently the divine *Rasha-lila* (a sort of circular dance with *Sree Krishna* and *Sree Radha* in the centre and the cowherds and cowherdesses singing and dancing all round). This fling at the divine sport of *Sree Krishna* and *Sree Radha* hurt the feelings of Guru Jnanananda Deva, nay cut Him to the quick. And He could not resist the impulse to remark, "I earnestly desire to hear the same tongue as is so eloquent to-day in its denunciation of "*Rash-lila*" recite the super-earthly dance in a deeply devout spirit and with a beating heart ! "

Not long afterwards Sri Sri Nitya Deva went forth to Dakshineswar in company with some adherents of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the Great One.

The Paramahamsa extended to the Abadhuta a cordial welcome with respectful ceremony and motioned Him with the most earnest entreaty to a seat beside Him. Then commenced an inspiring song celebrating the appearance of the two Brothers (*Sri Krishna* and *Sri Balaram*) in Nadia in the forms of *Sri Chaitanya* and *Sri Nityananda*.

It dissolved the Paramahamsa into ecstasies. It also baffled the desire of the Abadhuta for suppressing His high feelings, inasmuch as He was overwhelmed with an overpowering accession of the emotions of supreme love. Indeed, when they were lost in the divine joy of the stirring music, they resembled the two Divine *Brothers* of Nadia ; the sight melted many hearts and brought tears into many eyes. And even a man of the type of Sreejut Bijoy Krishna could not transcend the inspiring influence it exerted on the on-lookers. This is why he could not resist the impulse to follow the steps of the Yogacharya, who, when He came to His senses, repaired to the adjoining solitary *Panchabati* (an assemblage of five trees—the holy fig, the banyan, wood apple or marmelos, *Asoka* and emblic myrobalan). Here He took His seat at the foot of the *Bael*-tree in order to avoid the admiring gaze of the animated assembly and pass His time in peace and quiet in the silvan solitude. This meeting of Goswamiji with the Yogacharya was followed by the commencement of a religious discourse on the part of the former. He asked Sri Sri Nitya Deva many questions about the most hair-splitting problems of Hindu-religion. The Yogacharya solved them all most tactfully in homely, plain but forcible Bengali to the amazement of Goswamiji, who again enquired of Him if *Brahman* (the Eternal) is *Sakara* (Embodied) or *Nirakara* (Formless). The reply was, "He is *Sakara*, *Akara* (Form) and *Nirakara* and transcends Them as well." It struck the inquisitive questioner dumb, inasmuch as it appeared to him that he had never heard such words about the Eternal *Brahman*. But being unable to comprehend the spirit of the Yogacharya's utterance,

he asked, "What is It that transcends *Sakara*, *Akara* and *Nirakara*?" Guru Jnanananda Deva said, "What transcends the pale of thoughts or human comprehension is termed thus". Hence could Goswamiji realize the purport of His pronouncement with regard to *Brahman* (the Eternal). Great, indeed, was his amazement, when he found that the simple statement of the Yogacharya marvellously tallied with the *Upanishadic* viewpoint of the Supreme *Brahman*-Self.

Indeed, the association with the Yogacharya marked the transitional period in the life of Sreejut Bijoy Krishna Goswami, inasmuch as it was followed by his attainment of the grace of an illumined man of God-realization. This great soul pointed out to the aspirant the right path to be followed for the achievement of the supreme end of human life. Sreejut Bijoy Krishna now held on that path. This is why the *Rash-lila* no more appeared to him a subject-matter of adverse, vehement criticism but a fountain-head of inspiration. Indeed, once, while the Yogacharya chanced to pass by his residence, He (Sri Sri Nitya Deva) was enticed into the room where Goswamiji was performing the recital of *Rash-lila* with deep devotion. In the course of the recital he (Goswamiji) became so much overwhelmed with emotions that he burst into tears. Verily, the holy association with the Yogacharya and the attainment of His mercy and good will fructified into such a remarkable change in the composition of Goswamiji. In fact, he was no more the critic but the most devoted admirer of the mystic dance. The sight gave Guru Jnanananda Deva much pleasure and He took His seat to listen to his recital which soon dissolved Him into ecstasies. Indeed, tears .

now rolled incessantly down His rosy cheeks ; and super-earthly beauty and loveliness played about His countenance. This expression of His countenance prevailed upon the great-souled Bijoy Krishna to approach the Abadhuta with a beating heart and make a deep obeisance to Him with the utmost veneration. Thus did the remark made by the Abadhuta about the noble soul in the Brahmo Samaj produce the desired effect.

V

THAKUR'S WAYS APPEARED MYSTERIOUS

"Nor am I of all discovered, enveloped in My creation-illusion. This deluded world knoweth Me not, the unborn, the imperishable." (25)

Gita, Seventh Discourse.

It has already been stated that our Thakur, the Yogacharya Srisrimat Jnanananda Deva, would often move about in the pose of an *Abadhuta*, regardless of the observance of the simplest rules of health and purification and the established customs, practices and usages of the Hindu Society. At such times nothing but a dirty, torn piece of cloth would serve the usual purposes of body-clothing. Thus poorly furnished with the mockery of a garment, He was once proceeding towards the *Ganga* in the ecstatic state, when a few acquaintances caught sight

of Him and led Him with the utmost veneration to the house of Sj. Balaram Babu at Baghbazar. This noble soul was thrilled with joy at the unexpected arrival of Thakur. He received Him (Thakur) with every mark of cordiality and devotion and requested Him with respectful ceremony to assume a royal seat destined for the accommodation of their Protecting Deity, *Narayan* (the God *Vishnu*). Then all the members of the blessed family employed themselves, with due care, in tending and entertaining Him. Thakur partook of the feast that was spread before Him ; and as the time for Him to wash His mouth came after the repast, He appeared to come to His senses and be put out of countenance, when He said with a degree of hesitation, "I have not yet washed the anus and penis after voiding the bowels !" This intimation astounded Balaram Babu. Indeed, it afforded him the opportunity to realize that the sublime state of superconsciousness in which Thakur would often remain absorbed rendered Him quite careless of the needs of the body. It is this consideration that did not allow even the least degree of sorrow to lay hold on him, because Thakur had been placed on the holy, royal seat evidently in a state of impurity.

Thus would Thakur be sometimes served and entertained by acquaintances and devotees. Once, however, a gentleman, named Sj. Devendranath Majumdar, made it a point to follow the steps of Thakur along with a few friends. They were bent upon watching His conduct and behaviour so as to see how He would pass His time. Hence they wanted to learn what course of action they were to embark upon for elevating their souls. They

were men of affluent circumstances and so strangers to hardships and all forms of rigour. This rendered them an easy prey to exhaustion, hunger and thirst, when they passed a few hours in that state. But great was their amazement, as they found that Thakur walked on quite unconcernedly, although the rays of the sun had been oppressing Him for an abnormally long period. He also did not at all appear to be needful of food and drink. However, the Omniscient Thakur realized in no time how distressed His companions felt. So he knocked at the door of a house standing beside the street He had been walking along. And with hasty alacrity the host opened the door. He welcomed the guests with an air of dignified hospitality, and respectful ceremony. The attitude he assumed was that of a well-known acquaintance. He had kept the seats to be occupied by them ready prepared and requested them with the utmost eagerness to be kind enough to partake of the *prasada* (holy food already offered to God). The intimation, though quite welcome, struck Deven Babu and his friends dumb. They were at a loss to see how it was possible for the master of the house to have been aware of their visit to his residence, although he had not been previously advised of it. However, they enjoyed the holy food to their heart's content and with a deep sense of gratitude bade their generous and pious host farewell. He dismissed the visitors with a beating heart and a low reverence. But the wonderful behaviour of the master of the house made a deep impression on the minds of the companions of Thakur. They could not suppress the inquisitiveness to gauge the mystery. So one day they made very

careful searches for the house. But, to their infinite surprise, they were baffled in all their efforts for finding out either the house or the street.

Another event occurred somewhere during this period while Thakur took up His residence in a thatched cottage in a spot not far off from the Ballygunge station, Calcutta. It was surrounded by thickly growing trees and plants which defied all attempts at intrusion. Still, on hearing of the greatness of Thakur, a young man, who belonged to a respectable family, paid Him a visit one day. Then did he implore, with the utmost veneration, His presence to Kalighat; and when He deigned to agree to accede to his request, he took Him (Thakur) to the crematorium at Keoratola. After their arrival there the young man approached Him most humbly with a fervent prayer that He (Thakur) should be graciously pleased to guide and help him to resort, in that dark night of the new moon, to practices enjoined by the *Tantras*—practices to be observed for reaching the highest stage of spiritual advancement in the course of a single night. It goes without saying that, under the influence of the supreme mercy of Thakur, the aspirant could succeed in achieving his end after the attainment of the sight of his *Ishta Devata* (the Favourite and Chosen Deity).

Now, Thakur's extreme desire for sequestration again led Him to choose a spot beside the *Ganga*. It lay in the vicinity of *Anandamayee Kali*'s temple at Baghbazar. But the solitude of even that secluded place was often disturbed by the visits of devotees like Sj. Kedarnath Babu. Being unable to resist their heart-felt desire for enjoying His supremely holy society and illuminating and highly

inspiring discourses on religious matters, these *bhaktas* would present themselves to His residence. However, on one occasion Sj. Narendra Babu (Srimat Swami Vivekananda) felt strongly inclined to entertain Thakur and Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva with *mahaprasada*.* To this end, he had a he-goat sacrificed before the Goddess *Kali* and placed the holy flesh in an earthenware and deposited the same in the room where Thakur was residing. Then he took the path to the *Ganga* for ablution. Meanwhile Thakur, impelled, as it were, by an irresistible desire for proclaiming, by His wonderful behaviour, the glory and greatness of *prasada*, employed Himself in no time in partaking, with deep devotion, of the holy contents of the vessel till they were exhausted. Now, Sj. Narendra Babu came back and was utterly confounded and alarmed at the mysterious disappearance of the *mahaprasada*, since he could never dream that it was possible for one to take such a large quantity of the unboiled matter with bones, sinews etc. On enquiry he learnt, to his utter surprise, that this superhuman act had been performed by Thakur. Sri Sri Nitya Deva intimated to him that the injunction of the scriptures—"Prosada, whenever it offers itself to anybody, should at once be most devoutly accepted by him without the least hesitation"—had prevailed upon

* The word 'maha' means 'great'. The term '*mahaprasada*' usually means 'articles of food offered to a Deity ; the boiled rice offered to Lord *Jagannath* of Orissa, which is partaken of by all pilgrims, a great favour, great propitiousness or favourableness.' It also refers to the holy flesh of a he-goat that has been sacrificed to the Divine Mother after a solemn observance of the rites requisite.

Him (Thakur) to take to that course of action. The intimation filled the devotee with admiration, no doubt ; but his failure in fulfilling his heart-felt desire for making an offering of the *mahaprasada* to the Great Ones after having cooked it with the ingredients requisite, subjected him to agitating and agonizing reflections. However, he brought the matter to the notice of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva. Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva's joy knew no bounds, indeed, when He heard of the miraculous, glorious achievement of Thakur—an achievement by which He (Thakur) indicated the attitude in which *prasada** should be approached and dealt with by a devotee. He (Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva), however, quieted the agitated feelings.

"Indeed, about the glory, greatness and supreme holiness of *prasada* the *Mahanirvan Tantra* says, "The holy water of the *Ganga*, a *Salgram* (a sort of black geode found in the river *Gandaki* and worshipped by the Hindus as an emblem of *Vishnu*) and so on are affected by contactual pollution but articles (of food) offered to the Supreme *Brahman* are not thus affected..... In the matter of partaking of this sort of *prosada* one should not follow the laws governing the institution of caste-system and forbidding the acts of eating the remains of another's meal and the ascertainment of the time for taking one's meals and Controlling the rites of purification (or the practice of purity in all its aspects) O Goddess, the *prasada*, that has been offered to *Brahman* (the Eternal), is difficult of attainment by (or of great value to) even the Shining Ones, even if it be brought by a *Chandala* (a man of one of the lowest of mixed castes, being the offspring of a *Brahmana* mother by a *Sudra* father) and even if it comes out of the mouth of a dog..... If a man be stained with great sins or any other sort of sin, he is liberated from all of them on partaking only once of the *prasada* ; there is no doubt about it..."

of Sj. Narendranath with the remark, "When Nitya has partaken of the *prasada*, I feel fully satisfied."

"O Thou, who art all good, all wise,
To Thee our supplications rise !
Children of error and of night,
We need Thy wisdom and Thy light ;
No source so free, so pure as Thine,
Fountain exhaustless and divine."

VI

RESIDENCE IN BRINDABAN

"Verily, the Mahatmas, O Partha, partaking of My divine Nature, worship with unwavering mind, having known Me, the imperishable source of beings." (13)

Gita, Ninth Discourse.

Thus was Thakur passing His days in Calcutta, when the earnest entreaty of Balaram Babu and some other relations necessitated His departure from the city to the holy place of Brindaban. Here He took up His quarters in an arbour well-known as "Kala Babu's Kunja." He developed a strong leaning for the spot, since He could catch sight at night of the holy *Rash-lila* of *Sri Krishna* that would take place at Bangsibata. Of course, He would pay His visits to the various other distinguished quarters of Brindaban, too, in company with His devotees. But none of the images He found there could entice Him away from His solitary retreat so much as that of *Sri Sri Radha-*

raman installed by the saintly SriGopal Bhatta, a devoted follower of *Sri Sri Chaitanya Deva* of Nadia.

Once at the request of Balaram Babu He went forth to visit all the spots (rendered holy by association with the sports and plays of *SriKrishna*) including Mount Gobardhana. Then, as He directed His steps towards the pond or reservoir of water known as "*Radha-Kundu*," the ocean of His emotions was violently agitated with swelling waves and hence He passed into ecstasy. Tears rolled incessantly down His cheeks. Attracted by the supreme love of Thakur, Goddess *Sri Radha* appeared in Her favourite *Kundu* (pond) and took Her stand in the middle part of the same. It became illuminated with the bright, golden hue of Her body. Most probably Thakur had a heart-felt desire for an ablution in the holy pond. But it was frustrated, when it (the pond) appeared to Him to be permeated by the Goddess. So He had to resort to "*Lalita-Kundu*" for bathing Himself.

We have already indicated that Thakur's career was full of such wonderful incidents as defy a critical estimate with the weapons of Logic, nay as are likely to stagger the belief of man. But knowing full well that it will have its due at the hands of truly devout souls, we have ventured to record them briefly in this sketch. However, during His residence in the previously-mentioned "*Kunja*", a host of celestial beings one night made their way to His apartment. Their manners, gestures and habits pointed them out as being the cowherdresses of ideal character, who had been bound in the bond of supreme love to *SriKrishna* during His career at Brindaban. Indeed, divine beauty and lustre playcd about their body. Among them there was One who

combined with her matchless beauty surpassing merits. She extended to Thakur the most cordial welcome and led Him, with distinguished courtesy and fervour, on towards the "Nikunja bana" (or the arbour which often witnessed the inspiring meeting of *Sri Radha* with *Sri Krishna*). But Thakur was quite reticent about what had followed His entrance into the bower. This has made it impossible for us to touch upon the details connected with it.

Verily, in His affairs with the world Thakur was usually given to practise courtesy on a very extensive scale. It will be clearly indicated by the following funny incident :

There was in Kala Babu's Kunja a two-storied building. A room on the top floor was appointed for the accommodation of Thakur. And a Brahmachari (one performing the religious vow or penance of *Brahmacharya*) who had hailed from the up-country, took refuge in a room on the ground floor. Every day some devotees would visit Thakur with various dainty dishes and entertain Him with these. The sight of so many delicacies being presented to Thakur daily coupled with the consciousness of his failure in receiving their bounty, excited envy in the heart of the Brahmachari ; and so one day he went so far as to hurl sarcasms on Him thus, "A Sadhu (righteous man) has come from Bengal ; he has been lucky enough to have his stomach gorged with various rich articles of food offered by some people of Brindaban. Hence has He been able to develop a corpulent person. A murrain take these accursed givers who never care to offer me anything !" Now, Thakur who was pacing the roof at pleasure, overheard the scathing remarks that were being made about Him. He might have cried shame upon the spirit of jealousy and

malice, that characterised that Brahmachari's attitude towards a perfectly inoffensive Man like Him. But He never opened His lips ; nay He withdrew to a distance in order to render Himself invisible to him (the Brahmachari), since he (the Brahmachari) might feel ashamed, if he saw that he had been overheard by Thakur. Then He asked the devotees to present to the Brahmachari a quantity of the good cheer they would bring Him. And it goes without saying that His order was carried out. Thus was the Brahmachari blessed with Thakur's mercy.

However, Thakur's grace to the Brahmachari did not cease with the arrangement He made for his entertainment. It is with the express desire for according him more favour that He (Thakur) one day undertook to circumambulate the area of ten miles of the blessed Brindaban. Now, the circumambulation of the holy place along the appointed path is hailed by devout souls as a very meritorious deed ; it is believed to exert a purifying and elevating influence on the executor of the commission. And zealous Vaishnavas are given to execute it daily in the interest of spiritual advancement. But Thakur was the very Embodiment of supreme love and wisdom. And so He was never needful of the performance of such an act, inasmuch as He had no supreme end to achieve by the resort to devotional exercises like that. Of course, though Ever-liberated and Self-pleased, He would often play the part of a devotee for the guidance of ignorant men. And the task He set Himself on that day may be interpreted as such, too. Be that as it may, the path in Brindaban a devotee was to take for the achievement of the said purpose, gave way in two places under the tyranny of the current of the swelling.

Jumna ; this made it incumbent upon him to take to swimming for crossing over the two obstacles. Now, the Brahmachari, who was given to go round the area of Brindaban every day in an attitude of deep devotion, commenced the operation. Being, to all appearance, expert in the art of swimming, he easily surmounted the first obstacle. But Thakur was prevented from doing so because of His apparent ignorance of the art. This is why He halted and stood on the opposite side. Meanwhile the Brahmachari chanced to turn his back and in no time realized the difficulty to which He (Thakur) was exposed. So he swam along back to the spot to render Him (Thakur) his services. He approached Him (Thakur) in a spirit of sincerity and deep humility with a prayer to carry Him across the current in his arms. Impressed with his sincerity of purpose, Thakur did not decline his proffered aid. Now, as the Brahmachari was moving along, the association with the holy body produced a marvellous effect ; it swept off the ill-will he had cherished against Thakur ; and there reigned in its stead supreme love for Him. The second obstacle, too, was crossed over in the same way. Henceforward the Brahmachari's dealings with Him were marked by the feelings of attachment and cordiality. So, he went along with Thakur to the pasture land to see the tending of cows. The sight revived in Him (Thakur) the memory of the past career at Brindaban and overpowered Him with an overwhelming accession of the high feelings of supreme love. This prevailed upon the Brahmachari to bow low to His revered feet again and again and crave, in a spirit of deep devotion and humility, for His (Thakur's) mercy and love. Indeed,

a thorough change was achieved in his composition, inasmuch as he began henceforth to term Him (Thakur) *Prem-Baba* (Father of love). Oh ! what a miracle can be worked by the causeless mercy of the Supreme Lord ! This event was followed by an edifying discourse on the Vedanta on both parts. In the course of discussion Thakur named some Vedanta-texts and on enquiry learnt that he (the Brahmachari) had not yet read them. Then He (Thakur) made it a point to send him (the Brahmachari) those books after His arrival at Calcutta. And it goes without saying that the works reached the Brahmachari betimes.

Indeed, the Brahmachari was not the only person in Brindaban that was accorded the privilege and favour of association with Thakur. There was a Vaishnava named Gourkishor Dass mahasaya. He was distinguished for his supreme love for *SriKrishna* and attachment for prayers and meditation. He consigned himself to inaccessible seclusion in a solitary apartment on the topmost floor of a three-storied building and passed his time in constant performance of devotional duties. It was said that he had reached perfection by ascetic austerities and devotions. So, when the tidings of Thakur's arrival at Brindaban were communicated to him, His (Thakur's) glory and greatness were manifested in his heart. And hence he (Gourkishorji) developed supreme, friendly love for Him (Thakur). And as soon as Thakur presented Himself to his room, he threw his arms round Thakur's neck in an ecstatic state and heaped kisses upon His (Thakur's) cheeks. In that state tears rolled down his eyes so copiously that Thakur's body was drenched in them. Then Gourkishorji entertained with

his own hands Thakur with sweets and humbly prayed for His daily visit to his room.

“Help Thou, O Lord, my unbelief ;
And may my faith abound,
To call on Thee when Thou art near,
And seek where Thou art found.”

Now, the distinguished courtesy and high glow of love and devotion that characterised the treatment Gourkishorji accorded to Thakur, proved extremely amazing to many Vaishnavas. They could not resist the impulse to remark that it did not become a man of the eminence and standing of Gourkishorji to behave so amiably to One who bore no marks of a truly devout Vaishnava (namely, strings of sandal wood, beads, sandal paint and so on). This remark elicited the reply, “He (Thakur) transcends the states of a devotee, a lover and a man of wisdom. The time for disclosing His true Self has not yet come. But know it for certain that He is living in disguise.” Gourkishorji’s pronouncements respecting the extraordinary glory and greatness of Thakur reached the different quarters of the Vaishnavas. And hence He (Thakur) became soon famed far and wide as an uncommonly Great Man in their far-flung society. So it was not long ere the message was conveyed to Nityananda Dass mahasaya, the spiritual Master of Gourkishorji. This noble soul was an octogenarian ; but in spite of his infirmity he grew very anxious for seeing Thakur.

“Oh, for faith that I may view Him !
Oh, for love to draw me to Him !
.....”

Now, Thakur, whose kindness to the devotees was very

great, realized that Nityanandaji was awaiting His visit to his (Nityanandaji's) cottage on the tiptoe of expectation, although He (Thakur) had not been advised of it. So, one day He presented Himself to the hut where the old man would remain occupied with devotional exercises. As soon as the devotee knew of His (Thakur's) arrival, he advanced with unsteady steps towards Him (Thakur). Knowing the difficulty to which the devout Vaishnava was exposed, Thakur soon diminished the distance between Himself and the devotee with rapid strides ; and then He held him fast in a sweet embrace. Nityanandaji was beside himself with joy and high feelings of devotion which manifested themselves from within him in and through tears, horripilation and so on under the inspiring influence of the holy touch. Thakur, too, passed into ecstasy. After a while the noble soul entertained his Honoured Guest with a feast of fruits and sweets. But Nityanandaji did not feel satisfied till he prostrated himself at the holy feet, saying, "You must be either Sri Gouranga or Sri Nityananda. Deign to reveal Your true Self to me !" However, the words of consolation that Thakur addressed to him charmed down his agitation of mind. And when the normal state of mind was restored to the noble Vaishnava, Thakur went away.

"Oh my blessed Lord, accept me as the most humble
slave of feet.

What office is there that love cannot bless and beautify ?"

Now, the compliments tendered with so much veneration by the distinguished men of their community to Thakur paved the way for a great discussion about Him among the Vaishnavas. Some of them were too orthodox

to appreciate His liberal views. They hurled sarcasms on Him, saying, "He bears no marks of a Vaishnava ; He becomes equally overwhelmed with emotions on hearing the Names of *Kali*, *Krishna*, *Shiva* and other Gods and Goddesses. So, with all deference to the beatitude attained by Him, we feel constrained to remark that He bears no undeviating devotion towards *Sri Krishna*." Thakur heard this and once said to a distinguished Vaishnava, "Babaji mahasaya, I regard *Kali* as Mother, *Shiva* as Father, *Ganesh* as Brother and *Krishna* as Husband. I cannot behave like a wife of this Iron Age." This pronouncement was followed by His absorption in *samadhi*. He indicated by His utterance that the extreme love of a wife of this Age for the husband renders her quite indifferent to, nay forgetful of her parents. But He could not suffer His love for *Krishna*, His Husband, to predominate over that for the other Deities so as to totally intercept it. Should the above charge be levelled against Him on that account ? This remark of Thakur disillusioned the Vaishnavas and convinced them of the wrong notion they had cherished against His conduct and behaviour and views.

Thus did Thakur pass a few months in Brindaban and then made His journey to Benares along with some devotees.

VII

RETURN TO CALCUTTA AND RE-UNION WITH SRI SRI PARAMAHAMSA DEVA

"However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine, O Partha." (11) Gita, Fourth Discourse.

The importunities of His grand mother detained Thakur for a time in Benares whence He proceeded to Calcutta. His arrival here was hailed with intense joy and fervour by Sj. Kedarnath, Sj. Ramchandra and the other devotees. Once they went forth to Dakshineswar along with Him. Thakur's unexpected visit to Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva after a pretty long time was greeted by the Latter with every mark of cordiality and zeal. The Paramahamsa was beside Himself with joy, saying "Here comes My lost Treasure!" His heart swelled. And carried away by the emotions of love, He sank at Thakur's feet. Now, Thakur, who was the very Embodiment of civility, bent down, and holding Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva by the hand with distinguished courtesy, requited His obeisance with repeated civilities or reverences. Then Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva set to work to entertain Thakur with sweets with His own hand in a state of ecstasy. Indeed, He became so much overwhelmed with the high feelings of love that He sometimes burst into tears and sometimes into a fit of laughter; nay He was not even aware when His cloth slipped down His waist. In this state He washed the mouth of Thakur after feeding Him and wanted to rub it with the skirts of His cloth. But, to His utter surprise, it was missing. Now did He come to His senses and realize that He had been disrobed. This behaviour of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva struck the assembled devotees mute.

Now, when Thakur found that Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva had come round, He said, "You are a Brahmana by birth and senior to Me in age, how is it that you bowed low to Me?" This elicited from Sri Sri

Paramahamsa Deva the reply, "You are *Narayan* in the form of a man. You....." Scarcely had He uttered these words, when He passed into ecstasy. Thakur too could not resist the onrush of overwhelming emotions and by and by was lost in *samadhi*. Meanwhile the normal state of mind was restored to Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva and He said to His devotees, "Nitya is a *Paramahamsa*, Nitya is Ever-perfect. Do you take great care of Him. He has His mind always abstracted from the world and turned within. I have realized who He is." With this He turned to Thakur and asked, "Nitya, shall I disclose Thy true Self to them ?" These words visibly annoyed Thakur who rejoined, "If this be Your intention, I shall put a stop to My visits to You." This rejoinder somewhat discountenanced the Great One. Then He said, "No ! No ! I won't disclose ! I won't disclose !" The assurance thus given by Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva quieted the apparently agitated mind of Thakur.

Then the time for dinner approached. The two Great Ones took their seats along with the devotees to partake of it. But scarcely had the feast commenced, when Both of Them appeared to be again subject to overwhelming emotions of supreme love and began to feed Each Other. The sight astounded the observers stationed there. And devotee Ramchandra felt called upon to say to Thakur, "There exist so much cordiality and attachment between You ! How is it that during Your residence in Benares You did not care to drop a single card to keep Yourself informed of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva's state of health ?" At this Thakur replied, "There is a means of communication other than a letter—which keeps the One informed of the

message regarding the Other." The reply surprised Sj. Ramchandra.

On another occasion Thakur repaired to Dakshineswar. But it was amazing, indeed, that after a while He got up to start for Calcutta. Even the repeated requests of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva failed to detain Him there any longer. But this seeming courtesy and obstinacy on the part of Thakur did not hurt the feelings of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva, since He (Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva) was aware, no human contrivance could control the will of the Ever-liberated, Self-pleased Abadhuta. Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva even remarked, "Nitya is *Manmukhi* (Self-willed).

"He pays little heed to My request even." Now, there stood a devotee (evidently of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva) who marked with smothered displeasure what he in ignorance construed as the insolent conduct of Thakur ; and so he said to Him, "You have ventured to disregard the request of even Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva ! Mind that He will strike a death's blow to Your devotion." The observation was met by the reply on the part of Thakur, "I never desire to obtain such devotion as is fragile enough to crumble at the will of another." It totally disconcerted the devotee.

It has already been stated that Thakur would often become absorbed in *samadhi*. Once, however, His arrival at Dakshineswar was followed by His absorption in that state. Now, Sj. Hriday, a nephew of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva, would seek to bring Him (the Paramahamsa) back to His senses by placing his (Sj. Hriday's) hand on His (Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva's) chest, when the Great

One would be lost in deep contemplation. On seeing Thakur standing still in the courtyard in that state, he ventured to adopt the same means for bringing Him back to consciousness. And no sooner did he bring his hand in contact with Thakur's chest than his (Sj. Hriday's) tongue came out elongated. The portion of the tongue hanging outside the mouth measured about half a cubit long. The devotees assembled there started up at the sight and immediately brought the matter to the notice of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva who hurried to the place of occurrence. To His enlightened vision it was revealed that Thakur then remained absorbed in the deep contemplation of *Sri Sri Nrishingha Deva* (the fourth Incarnation of God *Vishnu*, when He appeared on Earth as the Lion-headed Man). So, He advised them to recite without delay a hymn in praise of *Sri Sri Nrishingha Deva* and condemned the imprudent conduct of Sj. Hriday, saying, "It was foolish on thy part to have placed thy hand on Nitya's chest, since thou hast the courage to do the same act in thy dealings with Me !" However, it goes without saying that the performance of the recital was followed by the desired effect, inasmuch as the tongue then began to enter again into his (Sj. Hriday's) mouth. And it was not long ere Hriday Babu came round. Thakur, too, regained His consciousness.

Thus would there be meetings between the two Great Ones sometimes at Dakshineswar and sometimes at the residence of devotee Ramchandra. They were on very intimate terms with Each Other. Indeed, so great was the attachment of the One for the Other that Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva once said to Thakur, "Nitya, Thou hast come ; so have I. Who will realize this ?"

However, once, after some time, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva bent His steps towards Daskshineswar in an abstracted and contemplative mood towards pay His visit there to the Divine Mother *Kali*. On that day Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva had gone on business to Calcutta. The sight of the Divine Mother filled Him with intense spiritual fervour and He began to dance with violent gesticulations and a stream of blood began to flow forth from His mouth. He now presented a terrible look. This served to inspire dread in the minds of the on-lookers. And they did not make bold to hold Him in order to keep Him from danger. Indeed, finding no other means, Sj. Pratap chandra Hazra and the other bhaktas began to worship Him with deep reverence by hymns. Then did His mind climb down to the ordinary level after a while.

On another occasion Thakur paid His visit to Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva at Dakshineswar. The Latter felt greatly rejoiced at seeing the Former and extended to Him the most cordial welcome. Then did He (the Paramahamsa) exhort His devoted wife, the pure-souled Sarada Devi, to feed Thakur with Her own hand. Quite ardently and reverently did she perform the noble task. This gave Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva ample satisfaction. And so He said to her with great delight, "Thy birth to-day has been well utilised."

"And I may love Thee, too, O Lord,
Almighty as Thou art ;
For Thou hast stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart."

It should also be noted here that Thakur's mercy would not remain confined only within the limited bounds of

those who, owing either to their noble descent or lofty position in Hindu society, had claims to consideration and respect. In fact, He would stretch His generous hands even to such men as are often regarded as untouchables in the estimation of high-class, orthodox Hindus To this category belonged Mr. William, a European, who resided in Calcutta. Once he called at the residence of devotee Ramchandra to seek an interview with Thakur. His prayer was granted and he was ushered by Sj. Lattyu Babu* into

*He was initiated by Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. And during His stay at the house of Sj. Ramchandra Dutta Sj. Lattyu Babu devoted himself in right earnest to the service of Thakur. He forbade him, as was His wont specially in those days, to disclose to others the matter of his initiation by Him. The bhakta reached a high stage of spiritual advancement by the grace of our most venerable Guru Deva. And the light of wisdom he thus gained would enable him to determine, without difficulty, truths about God and solve even subtle problems of righteousness easily. His exposition too was very simple and impressive. When he adopted the life of renunciation, he became known as Swami Adbhutananda. Although he kept the matter of his initiation by Thakur private, his unflinching devotion to Him became an open secret. Some years back two bhaktas of Kalighat (Calcutta) Mahanirvan math, when they visited Sri Sri Ramakrishna Math in Benares, noticed a holy Photo of Thakur carefully placed close beside his couch (i. e. the couch used by him during his life-time) in a recess in a wall of a room on the upper floor. Again, the following words addressed by Thakur to Sj. Lattyu also throw light on this :

"Prahlad's father subjected him (Prahlad) to so much torture and so much persecution ; but when *Bhagawan* (Lord) *Nrsingha Deva* wanted to grant him a boon, he said, "My Lord, I have seen You. What boon else may I now be in need of ? But be graciously pleased to forgive father and accord him the favour that may enable him to reach the blessed state (of liberation)." Lattyu, you call Rama Babu father ; he has reproached and insulted you very much. Still, pray to God that He may forgive him (Ram Babu)."

His holy presence. However, to the devout Christian Thakur appeared to be his Merciful Lord, Christ. The sight of his Favourite Deity (being thus unexpectedly and miraculously revealed before him) thrilled the European gentleman with excessive joy not unmixed with supreme devotion. Under the overwhelming pressure of high feelings he sank at the holy feet and burst into tears ; nay he heaped kisses on them (the hallowed feet).

Verily, while Thakur was residing at devotee Ramchandra's place, stirring songs in praise of God would often be sung till midnight. This would keep the house reverberating and distract the sleep of the neighbours. Sj. Ramchandra realized the situation fully. And in order that the musical performance might go on uninterruptedly he had an extensive plot of land bought in the suburbs of Calcutta with the money supplied by Thakur. The calm atmosphere of the secluded spot being favourable to the practice of *yoga*, Thakur named it 'Yogodhyana.' In view of the silvan solitude that reigned there Thakur developed a strong leaning for the place ; He also passed many days in the same in enjoying melodious songs sung by the devotees. There was a gardener there who hailed from Orissa. He was devotedly attached to *Sri Sri Chaitanya Deva*. Even this poor man, to whom the society assigns so insignificant a position, found refuge under the sheltering wings of Thakur's causeless mercy ; he was also fortunate enough to see the form of his *Ishta Devata* manifested in the holy body of Thaknr. Henceforward whenever he would meet Him (Thakur), he could not resist the impulse to call Him by the name of *Chaitanya* with an agitated mind.

It is impossible for ordinary human beings to bring within the purview of comprehension the infinite glory and greatness of Thakur, whose wonderful behaviour with those He would come into touch with, remained often a mystery to many. Indeed, He was the Purifier of the fallen and Saviour of the vilest of the vile. The following incident will bear a glowing testimony to this :

There was a young man in the city of Calcutta, who felt attracted to Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva and so would often repair to Dakshineswar to render his devotion to the Great One. Somehow or other he learnt that Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva was fond of *jilapi* (a kind of sweetmeat with tortuous windings fried in ghee and then sweetened). This is why one day he carried a quantity of this sweetmeat to Dakshineswar and placed it with deep regard before his Object of supreme reverence. But quite an unforeseen, unpremeditated and incomprehensible state of things arose, when Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva knowing, by His divine wisdom and vision, of the low descent of the young man, sternly declined to accept the gift ; nay He (Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva) went so far as to order the removal of some crusts of earth from the spot where the delicacies had been laid and then the cleaning and washing of the same by means of cowdung and the holy water of the *Ganga*. This inscrutable behaviour of the Great One (the Ever-liberated Soul, who, being naturally endowed with the knowledge of *Brahman* (the Eternal) was above the observance of the injunctions of the scriptures and social customs, practices, and prejudices) gave a rude shock to the heart of the unfortunate visitor. Indeed, thus slighted by the Paramahamsa, he resolved to commit

suicide and hence put an end to his accursed life. It was at this critical moment that Thakur, who evidently had not been advised of his distress, revealed Himself in a mysterious way before the victim of social oppression. Indeed, the young man's birth was so disgraceful that the society would never accept him as its member. But He (Thakur) allayed the agony of his mind, saying, "Shake off your despondency ; I am giving you shelter." The causeless mercy thus shown to and blessings thus showered on the depressed and down-trodden soul by a Man possessed of superhuman beauty, charms and lustre, soothed the extreme suffering of his mind ; nay they filled him with inexpressible joy and brought tears in his eyes. He surrendered himself to the mercy of Thakur and betook himself to the blessed life of renunciation under His (Thakur's) guidance and preceptorship. This devotee was henceforward known as Srimat Swami Krishnananda. This matter was eventually brought to the notice of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva, who remarked, "I shall grant My grace to a chosen few ; but Nitya will prepare cakes with rotten cow-dung."

"He looks on all with the same benevolence,
As the wind blows on the King and the slave alike.

.....

He is in His nature like the fire that warms and
lights and cleans."

Now, a prayer made by any man to Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva for initiating him into an esoteric *mantra* or prayer-incantation would be met by a stern refusal and severe scolding at the hands of the Great One who would say, "That is not My mission ; Nitya will do this." So,

when a devotee named Sj. Anadinath, an inhabitant of the village of Sadhuhati in the district of Jessor (Bengal), approached Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva with such a request. He (Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva) grew vehement against him and enjoined him to take the Name of "Nitya" always for the achievement of his end. The devotee yielded implicit obedience to Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva's order and constantly muttered the Name. Now, when Anadi Babu was thus subject to agitating reflections as to how he would obtain a true spiritual Preceptor, Thakur was residing at Nabadwip. He asked His disciple, Sj. Dharmadas Roy, to write a letter to the devotee, requesting him to go to the holy place for the fulfilment of his heart-felt desire. Verily, on receiving Sj. Roy's letter, Sj. Anadinath reached Nabadwip in time and repaired to the house of Sj. Dharmadas Babu, who ushered him into the holy presence of Thakur in no time. He (Sj. Anadinath) thus attained His grace and shelter and was blessed with the sight of his *Ishta Devata* (Favourite and Chosen Deity) manifested in the form of Thakur.

We have already referred to Sj. Balaram Basu's supreme attachment for Thakur. This devotee had an uncle in an ill-tempered gentleman. His sleep would be disturbed at night by the stirring songs sung by devotees to the highest pitch of their voice in the residence of Balaram Babu, when Thakur and Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva would present Themselves to the house. He would resent this and at times go so far as to condemn the Great Ones. However, once an inspiring music dissolved Thakur into ecstasies and effected an ecstatic dance on His part. Now, Biswambhar Babu, Balaram Babu's uncle, chanced to

appear in the court-yard where Thakur was dancing. The sight of the wonderful, elegant dance proved extremely enchanting to him. He watched, with a keen interest, the behaviour and movement of Thakur who in the meanwhile became totally absorbed in *samadhi*. So, He stood still in the court-yard. Now, Biswambhar Babu, who was quite ignorant of what *samadhi* is, happened to touch the body of Thakur and felt it to be cold and stiff. This filled him with great concern and alarm. And he invited a doctor to examine the case. The doctor, after a careful examination, declared Thakur to be dead. At this alarming communication Biswambhar Babu was oppressed with grief. But great was his amazement, indeed, when Thakur gradually came to His senses. This event proved extremely inspiring and illuminating to Balaram Babu's uncle, since it swept off the cloud of aversion so long he had cherished for Thakur and His adherents and for Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva, too.

Not long after his reformation Sj. Biswambhar once made up his mind to pay a visit to Tarakeswar. Balaram Babu, Bhupati Babu and some other devotees consented to join him. Meantime Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva chanced to appear there. Biswambhar Babu approached Him most humbly with a prayer to grace the party with His holy society. Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva, whose throat had already been affected with the onslaught of the fatal disease, which subsequently brought about His eternal separation from devotees and friends, declined the prayer on the ground of His indisposition. Just at that time Thakur made His appearance there in the usual habit and pose of the Ever-liberated, Self-p'leased *Abadhuta*,

accompanied by Sj. Tarak Ghoshal (Srimat Swami Sivananda, ex-President, Belur math, who in those days followed Him (Thakur) like His shadow). Seeing Him, Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva asked them to implore Thakur's company. At this Biswambhar Babu said, "We shall deem it a great favour, if He deigns to grant us the privilege. Indeed, the instructions He imparts appear much more impressive and attractive to us than those imparted by Your revered Self." Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva replied, "Yes, there is *Saraswati* (the Goddess of learning) in the throat of Nitya. So He can deal with a subject with marvellous skill." However, the earnest prayer of the devotees prevailed upon Thakur to accompany them to Tarakeswar. His arrival there was followed by His entrance into the temple where He touched the *Shiva-Linga* (The Phallus Emblem of *Shiva*) and asked the devotees to offer their prayers by a due observance of the ceremonies requisite.

"Though dark the path, yet if Thou wilt
My Guide, my counsel be,
I'll gladly follow where each step
Will bring me nearer Thee."

Meanwhile He set Himself the task of circumambulating the temple. He was in a state of ecstasy; and so even before the termination of the act He sank down unconscious of the happenings of the external world near the basin into which flows the holy water with which the *Shiva-Linga* is bathed. His legs lay stretched, and feet dipped in the water. However, the devotees performed the worship of *Shiva* and resolved to devote themselves to the work Thakur had undertaken to achieve. But their

resolution gave way, when they found their Object of supreme devotion in a state of absorption in *samadhi*. So, instead of attaching themselves to the duty of circumambulating the temple, they employed themselves in partaking of the holy water from the holy feet. But when He regained His consciousness, He found how He was being dealt with by the devotees ; this served to discountenance Him.

Then the devotees undertook the return journey to Calcutta after all the functions connected with the worship of *Shiva* had been duly discharged. Thakur too joined the party. His return to the city was followed by His visit to the garden-house at Cossipur, where Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva had been lodging since the time when the previously-mentioned, fell disease had become more oppressive. He entered into the apartment assigned to the use of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva and took His seat beside His (Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva's) head. His (Thakur's) visit was greeted with great delight by the Great One. He intimated to Thakur privately His resolution to renounce His earthly frame in no time. Thakur attended to His intimation with a deep sense of sorrow and said that His (Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva's) departure from the surface of the earth would be a great evil, inasmuch as it would deprive a great many individuals of His mercy. Indeed, there was a long conference between Them on this occasion. Thakur disclosed to His devotees only the portion that we have touched upon ; but He was quite reticent about what else Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva had communicated to Him in the course of the conversation.

However, when the parley drew to a close, the Great

One asked Sj. Narendra (Srimat Swami Vivekananda) to supply Him with some flowers and a quantity of sandal-paste and then directed the devotee to wait outside. In the mean time He placed with deep devotion and tears in His eyes the offering of flowers at the holy feet of Thakur and bowed low to Him. And Thakur picked them up and scattered them on the holy body of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva with tearful eyes. Indeed, this touching scene of devotion and courtesy practised on so extensive a scale was ominous, inasmuch as it indicated that Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva thus took eternal leave of Thakur. The following day was a day of intense grief and anxiety to the devotees, lovers and admirers of the Great One, since all hopes of His recovery were abandoned. The fell disease had laid its hand heavy on His strength ; still on the eve of His departure Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva sought to console His adherents in a faint voice. But theirs was a grief which admitted of no consolation. While scenes of confusion and sorrow were passing around Him, Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva called on Thakur, when lo ! a divine light of dazzling effulgence radiated from the holy body of the Great One and speedily made its way to the holy feet of Thakur. The sight astounded the on-lookers, of whom mention may be made of devotees Ramchandra, Giris, Bhupati, Rakhal and Narendra. It served to heighten their regard for Thakur.

The sad event was followed by the rite of the cremation of the holy body, some bones and ashes of which were deposited in a vessel. But in the absence of a suitable place for its burial, devotee Ramchandra felt prevailed upon to approach Thakur with the prayer that the holy

remains might be allowed to be interred in His favourite "Yogodyana" at Kankurgachhi. And with a significant smile that dimpled His lovely face, He granted his (Sj. Ramchandra's) prayer. Now, the difficulty that oppressed Sj. Ramchandra was as to the recovery of the previously-mentioned vessel from the clutches of Sj. Narendra with whom he was at variance. So, the need for the intervention of Thakur, to whom Sj. Narendra would yield implicit obedience, was keenly felt. Indeed, the importunities of the devotee prevailed upon Him (Thakur) to direct Sj. Narendra to make over his charge to Sj. Ram Dutt. And it goes without saying that the stubborn spirit and adamantine attitude of Sj. Narendra speedily yielded to His direction. Thus recovered, the invaluable treasure was buried in the "Yogodyana". Now did the realisation dawn on Sj. Ramchandra that Thakur, who had the future at His finger-tips, had the spot at Kankurgachhi purchased under his (Sj. Ram Dutt's) name at His own expense for the burial of the remains of the holy body of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva.

This event was followed by His (Thakur's) temporary residence in the secluded spot. However, the assemblage of visitors in abundance from Calcutta to the "Yogodyana" during His stay there greatly affected His enjoyment of seclusion. They would flock to it evidently to attend to His edifying discourses on religious subjects and observe the inspiring look He would persent when stirring songs on God would dissolve Him into ecstasies and hence pave the way for His total absorption in *samadhi*. Indeed, the assembled visitors would feast their eyes on the matchless beauty and unparalleled loveliness

and majesty of His countenance. Attracted by the earth-fascinating charms of His Form and no less by His excellences, many surrendered themselves to His mercy. It is under the supreme influence this too exerted on Sj. Rakhal, Sj. Narendra, Sj. Upendra and some other devotees of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva that they could not resist the impulse to approach Thakur with an earnest entreaty, nay humble prayer to occupy the seat left vacant by the departure of the Great One. But Thakur was given to exhort a devotee to keep his faith in and devotion to His *Guru* untarnished. And so He discouraged the illustrious adherents of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva to embark upon such a course of action as was most likely to affect, nay endanger their reverence for their Master. He sought earnestly to induce them to bear in mind the fact that a devotee should assign to none else, however great, the position of his *Guru* – the position that should be held unique. In fact, He ardently desired them to throw their enthusiasm into the adoption of measures that were sure to spread the glory and greatness of their Master far and wide. But when He found that His voice was a voice in the wilderness, He felt, contrary to His will, constrained to set forward towards Benares for the welfare of the followers of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva.

In this connection we briefly touch upon a dialogue that once ensued between Sj. Girish Ghosh and his brother, Sj. Atul Ghosh. Sj. Girish said, "Why do you adore Nitya Babu so much and why don't you care to pay your respects to *Ma-Thakurani* (the pure-souled wife of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva)?" At this Atul Babu replied, "Nitya Babu is the Incarnation of Sri Sri Jagannath

(or *Sri Sri Krishna*) and Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva That of *Sri Sri Balaram* and *Ma-Thakurani* blinks between Them like *Sri Subhadra*."

We have already indicated that there was a time when Sj. Tarak Ghoshal* traced the foot-steps of Thakur like His shadow. Indeed, he thus spent a period of six years or so in close association with Him (Thakur). Once he was urged by a strong inclination to mutter the Name of his *Ishta Devata* at night in the crematorium ; but he had not the courage to take his seat alone there. One night, however, he found Thakur sitting at Nimtalla ghat. He sought to avail himself of the opportunity this afforded

*During this period of His life Thakur would live neither in any *Ashram* (monastery or hermitage) nor in any *Math* founded either by Himself or by His disciples. Sj. Tarak Ghosal was now initiated by Him and became His staunch adherent and would always follow His steps wherever He would bend them. Now, lest there should assemble before Him a large number of individuals, craving for His guidance in the path of piety and for shelter at His hallowed feet, Thakur, because of His strong leaning for sequestration, forbade Sj. Tarak, too, to let any body else know of Him. The *bhakta* carried out very carefully this mandate of our revered *Guru Deva*. But many of his intimate friends and acquaintances were familiar with this fact. So, references were made to it in some notes about him. However, evidently after his adoption of the life of renunciation he became known as Srimat Swami Shivananda. He was also elected President, Belur Math. From the foregoing statements it is abundantly clear that, although Sj. Tarak and Sj. Lattu became distinguished as the followers of Sri Sri Ramakrishna Deva, they had, in fact, been privately initiated by Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. Sj. Lattu attained His grace while he remained employed in the service of Sj. Rama-chandra Dutt.

him and took his position at a distance of ten or twelve cubits from Him (Thakur) for the achievement of his purpose. He went on muttering the holy Name ; and it was not long ere he cried out, "Oh ! help me ! Somebody is passing by me !" Thakur replied, "I am here ! Why do you fear ? Go on muttering the Name !" But these words of encouragement failed to remove the terror that had laid hold on Sj. Tarak Ghoshal ; he now drew near to Thakur and entreated Him earnestly to go along with him away from the place that appeared so horrible to him. At this Thakur said, "I warned you before against observing those practices in the crematorium. But you paid no heed to my warning !"

A critical study of Thakur's career will convince one that Thakur never withheld His grace even from him who was not devoted to Him. Now, in spite of his supreme attachment for Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva, Sj. Giris Ghosh at first bore little reverence towards Him (Thakur). But Thakur's grace is irresistible. Once when Sj. Giris took his seat to meditate on Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva, his repeated efforts for seeing the Form of his Object of supreme love revealed in his heart were frustrated. He was astounded, nay felt violently disturbed in mind to see that, instead of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva, Thakur occupied his heart and that Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva pointed to Him (Thakur) from a distance. This state of things subjected Sj. Giris to so much annoyance and irritability that he was compelled to put a stop to his meditation and say to Sj. Atul Ghosh, "A devil to-day obstructed my devotional exercises !" This latter said, "What do you say ?, The Name of God scares away all devils and evil spirits.

And you say that you were ended in muttering His Name through the obstruction caused by a devil ! What's the matter ?" Sj. Giris Ghosh gave a detailed account of how he had been prevented from meditating on Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva. At this Sj. Atul said, "Oh ! you could not solve this apparent riddle ! The event clearly indicates that Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva pointed out by His finger, "It is as a result of the perfection reached by you in your meditation on Me that the Moon of Nitya has risen in your heart to-day." This illuminating solution of what had puzzled Sj. Giris so much disillusioned him (Sj. Giris). And good sense and reason having dawned on him, he realized the greatness of Thakur. This is why he surrendered his son (Dani babu), daughter and other relatives to the revered feet of Sri Sri Nitya Deva and felt blessed.

Indeed, Sj. Giris developed so much reverence for Thakur thenceforward that when a very intimate friend of his felt strongly inclined to travel like the devout, noble dramatist in the path of righteousness, he strongly recommended him (his friend) to resign himself on the mercy of Thakur. Verily, he (Sj. Giris) was of opinion that nothing but the grace of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva could purge him from the sins committed by him by his long addiction to voluptuousness. This friend of Giris Babu, who was well-known as Paran Babu, was wedded to a profligate course of life and indulged in all the vices that lewdness brings in its train. To render devotion to those who had a right to demand it at his hands was alien to his nature. So, he did not feel it a crime to deal scornfully with Thakur and Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva and term

Them contemptuously 'great geese'* . But the door of Thakur's grace was always open to a wretch of the type of Paran Babu. This is why He (Thakur) stretched His generous hands even to this villain of the deepest dye, when he (Paran Babu) craved, in a spirit of humility, for His mercy. Henceforward a thorough change was achieved in his (Paran Babu's) composition ; in fact, all his sins being now whitewashed, he betook himself to the blessed life of renunciation under the inspiring guidance and instruction of Thakur and became known among His (Thakur's) adherents as Srimat Swami Govindananda. In short, a criminal, who had been so addicted to wine and hemp and given himself up to the gratification of sensual cravings quite unscrupulously, now devoted himself without the least stint to the service of Thakur by denying himself of all the pleasures of the senses and comforts of the world. This is another instance of what a miracle would be worked by the causeless mercy of Thakur.

"Lord, keep me in Thy heavenly way,
And bid the tempter flee.
And let me never, never stray
From happiness and Thee."

Now, being the Preacher of the all-embracing doctrine of the Universal Religion, Thakur recognized the claims of the views of all sects and communities. So, the recital of the *Koran* and the Bible proved as much attractive to Him as that of the *Gita* and the other religious texts of the Hindus. This is why once when He chanced to pass the Foujadari Balakhana Masjid in Calcutta, He felt enticed

*The term 'parama' means 'great' and 'hamsa' also means 'goose'.

by the recital of the *Koran* that was being performed inside the holy institution ; and so He took His stand before the door, not being allowed to go inside. Now, no sooner had a few holy words of God entered into His ears than He became absorbed in *samadhi*. The sight elicited from the assembled devotees the remark, "Here stands the true Mussalman."

It should also be mentioned here that, during His residence at the house of devotee Ramchandra, Thakur was down with a serious type of malady ; this robbed Him of even the strength to stir from His bed independently of the help of anybody. The case was so alarming with Him that doctors had much doubt even about His recovery. But it was amazing, indeed, that One, who was in a dying state and too weak to get up, became overwhelmed with ecstasies on hearing a song on God sung in a loud voice by a band of singers in the adjoining street ; nay He took His stand in the court-yard by raising His hands to heaven. And it was not long ere He was lost in *samadhi*. This inscrutable behaviour of Thakur caused great anxiety to those who were given to tend and nurse Him, since it was most likely to shock His weak nerves violently. And this was sure to be followed by terrible consequences. But Thakur's ways were mysterious. Indeed, this event, far from aggravating the malady, paved the way for His recovery. However, when Thakur was somewhat cured, He intimated to His adherents His desire for a journey to Benares. The intimation made them very sad. But the sweet words of consolation Thakur addressed to them allayed their grief. Then He undertook His journey to the holy place.

VIII

THAKUR AGAIN VISITED BENARES

"The evil-doing, the deluded, the vilest men, they come not to Me, they whose wisdom is destroyed by illusion, who have embraced the nature of demons. (15)

Fourfold in division are the righteous ones who worship Me, O Arjuna ; the suffering, the seeker for knowledge, the self-interested and the wise, O Lord of the Bharatas"(16)

Gita, Seventh Discourse.

After reaching Benares, Thakur had to take up his quarters at "Ganes Mahalla" at the earnest entreaty of His grandmother. There was another lady named Sreejukta Prasannamayee who had a remote relationship with her. Both of them devoted themselves, with a keen interest, to His service. And under their zealous care Thakur regained his lost health in no time.

Thakur's residence in Benares was remarkable for the seclusion to which He consigned Himself. Nobody was usually allowed access into the apartment that was appointed exclusively for His accommodation. He would pass His time in a state of ecstasy which sadly intercepted regularity in diet. And there was a time when He would remain totally absorbed in *samadhi* for a period of ten or twelve days—a period during which He was prevented from using water even. Again, as the normal state of mind would be restored to Him, he would employ Himself in composing many invaluable treatises on religious subjects.

As time wore on, the message of His residence at the above-mentioned house was conveyed to some noble souls. Among them mention may be made of Dr. Priyalall, and an orthodox Brahman of the name of Sj. Umeschandra Panda who hailed from Ranigunj in the district of Burdwan (Bengal). The former was a nephew to a devout lady called Sreejukta Sivasundari. During her stay in Calcutta, this lady had the rare privilege of observing the conduct and behaviour of both Thakur and Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva, when They paid Their visits to thehouse of devotee Ramchandra. She was specially impressed with the way in which Thakur would be overwhelmed with high emotions of supreme, divine love that would render Him quite insensible to the happenings of the external world. Hence she developed for Him deep filial affection. Her nephew, too, was bound to Him in the bond of love and friendship.

Now, Sj. Priyalall, Sj. Umeschandra and some other gentlemen felt much attracted to Thakur. And so they would often repair to "Ganes Mahalla" and earnestly implore the privilege of being allowed to enjoy His inspiring society and discourses on religious subjects. So. inspite of His abhorence for the dust and din of the busy world, He had to appear before them in order to fulfil their heart-felt desire. They would marvel to see the captivating charms and golden looks of His youthful form and hear the sweet words He would address to them. Indeed, there was something singular in Thakur's discussion on religious matters, inasmuch as it would often be followed by His absorption in *samadhi*. The devotees would be struck dumb, when He would pass into ecstasy and be totally lost in deep contemplation. In this condi-

tion He would remain quite unconscious of His body. Now, among the visitors that would flock to Thakur's place in large numbers, there were some who suspected grievously His state of absorption in *samadhi*. Dr. Priyalall was one of them. So, in order to see if the state was real or assumed, he once pressed a glowing piece of charcoal hard on His body. But great was his amazement when he found that, although the fire roasted the part of the body on which it had been laid, Thakur did not appear to be in the least affected by it. Indeed, the calm and bright expression of His countenance underwent no change whatsoever. The sight oppressed Priyalall Babu with remorse with all its vipers, mixed with regret and repentance and shame for his horribly foolish and imprudent conduct, and mischievous spirit which had prompted the crime. These urged the immediate removal of the cause of the inhuman torture.

Now, Thakur, into whose eyes no human being could succeed in throwing dust, was aware of all the happenings. But lest His beloved friend (Priyalall Babu) should be put to shame, He connived at and maintained perfect silence about this ; nay there was no departure from His usual dealings with him and the other devotees. This attitude of Thakur intensified the mental agony of Priyalall Babu and his advisers, since it conveyed to them a more definite idea of His supreme mercy to His adherents. However, a week passed ; still Priyalall Babu had not the courage to make a clean breast of his heart ; but Thakur called on His friend and said, "Priya Babu, would you kindly see why this part (pointing to the affected part) of My body is causing Me pain ? What's the matter ?"

This question totally discountenanced the doctor, nay pained his inmost soul. Now he found that it was impossible for him to draw a veil over the matter. So he gave a detailed account of the same in a very sorrowful and bewildered manner and craved His (Thakur's) forgiveness for the cruelty he had so injudiciously practised on Him (Thakur).

This frank confession of crime on the part of the doctor must have been highly appreciated by Thakur who consoled him, saying, "Priya Babu, don't grieve over this. The Supreme, Merciful Lord thus had my patience put to test by you. Being merely an instrument in His hands, you are not in the least responsible for the crime. Indeed, by His grace it caused Me no pain at all." The sweet words of consolation at once healed the sore of his (Priyalall Babu's) heart. And thus absolved of the horrible sin, he remained for ever grateful to Thakur.

As Thakur's love for His adherents baffles all efforts for a critical appreciation, so the attachment of His followers and friends, too, defies all attempts at scrutiny. This will be attested by the behaviour of one Sj. Nagendra-nath Sen, a contemporary of devotee Sj. Giris Ghosh. Indeed, Thakur's departure to Benares left him sorrowing. The intense pang of separation it caused evidently begot in him an aversion for his environment and urged him often to keep gazing at the sky in a listless state of mind. In fact, he had his heart and mind wholly centred on his Object of supreme love. If at such a time a patch of cloud were seen flying in the west, he would burst into a passion and exclaim, "There floats the cloud towards Benares !" It goes without saying that every fibre of his

heart would bleed, as it were, when the passage of the cloud would make inroads upon his agonising sense of separation from Thakur. Indeed, no human contrivance could soothe his bereavement. However, the delivery by a postman of a letter from Benares (penned by Thakur) would somewhat allay it. And he would hold the postman fast in a sweet embrace, when the much-coveted object would reach Nagen Babu through his (the postman's) accidental intercession ; nay the man would be amply rewarded by the devotee for the act. Really, such love is rare on Earth. It manifested itself only from the cowherdesses of ideal character (of Brindaban) who bore undeviating and unflinching, divine love towards *Sri Krishna*.

It behoves us to touch, in this connection, upon some more aspects of Sj. Nagen's devotion to Thakur. Once his earnest desire for bringing the holy sandals used by Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva (during His earthly career and subsequently worshipped by the devotees in the Kankurgachhi Yogodyana) in contact with his head was frustrated by the intervention of a devotee of the Great One. This shaft of disappointment darted by the gentleman pierced the tender heart of Nagen Babu who revered Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva deeply. It inflicted a severe wound on it (Sj. Nagen's heart). And nothing but the balm of Thakur's consolation could heal it. So he at once set forward towards Benares. And on reaching his destination, he approached Thakur with the fervent prayer that He (Thakur) would, without delay, deign to place His shod feet on his (Sj. Nagen's) head. The earnest entreaty of the devotee so solemnly communicated, appealed to the heart of Thakur. And He (Thakur) welcomed him

cordially and quieted the storm of his heart with the wand of His consolation.

"When a man is primed with faith in the Guru,
To him is granted the vision of God."

On another occasion a gentleman assumed towards Thakur a condemnable attitude of aversion and hence made some disparaging remarks before Nagen Babu about his Object of supreme love. This cut him (Nagen Babu) to the quick. And he at once turned his back to the calumniator and never saw his accursed face in his (Sj. Nagen's) life.

The door of Thakur's apartment at the previously-mentioned "Ganes Mahalla" was always open to Nagen Babu. So his hopes of meeting Thakur were not disappointed, even when once at midnight he repaired to His (Thakur's) room ; nay he felt blessed, as he saw it illuminated and perfumed respectively with the divine light and the divine scent that the holy body of Thakur emitted. At this unpremeditated state of things the devotee was overwhelmed with wonder not unmixed with joy. He stood spell-bound, as it were. Meanwhile Thakur awoke from His slumber and was pleased to know on enquiry that Nagen Babu was faring well. The latter, however, could not stifle the desire for communicating to the Former his experiences ; he also begged of Thakur most respectfully to explain to him the cause of the mystic light and the mystic scent. This enquiry elicited the reply, "You are an object of special mercy to God. And so you have been entitled to such realization of His glory and greatness. However, do not disclose your experiences to anybody. Thus terminated the conference.

that was followed by Thakur's recommendation of repose to Nagen Babu. And so he then went to bed to rest his tired limbs and brain.

While Thakur was residing in Benares, Sreejukta Anandamayee, His grandmother, fell a victim to a fell disease to which she succumbed. However, on the eve of her death Thakur uttered loudly a sacred formula technically characterised in the Aryan scriptures as "*Tarak-Brahma-Nama*" for the liberation of her soul. The devout lady, who had retained her sense till the vital breath failed her, took eternal leave of her beloved Grandson, saying, "Here comes Mother *Annapurna* accompanied by Father *Visweswar*. My Darling, You have brought Your hand in contact with my body. It is now high time for me to depart." The obsequies and the *sraddha* ceremony were magnificently celebrated by a due observance of the rites requisite. Indeed, the death of Sreejukta Anandamayee was a signal for His aunt, Sreejukta Prasannamayee and admirer, Sreejukta Sivasundari, to take charge of Thakur who required constant vigilance and tending for reasons quite obvious to readers. They cherished Him with the affectionate care of mothers. Indeed, Sreejukta Sivasundari felt so much attracted and attached to Him that she would trace His steps even when Thakur would step forth to the *Ganga* for ablution. One day He stood on the bank of the sacred river after His bath, when a Brahmana lady made her way to the spot; then did she wash His feet with the holy water in the teeth of every opposition. Meanwhile a devout Brahmana followed Him up to "Ganes Mahalla", worshipped Him with the utmost veneration with flowers and the holy water of the *Ganga* and entertained Him

with sweets. Then he partook of the holy *prosada* and departed from the place. But it is difficult to see why those devout souls, who were quite unknown to Thakur, felt impelled to render their devotion to Him.

Sometime after this a pedant named Anadi Babu attained, through the intercession of Dr. Priyalall, the permission to be ushered into Thakur's presence. Although he had heard of His (Thakur's) greatness and supremacy, he had little faith in all these things. So he sought an interview with the express desire for holding a debate with Thakur on the subtlest problems of philosophy and religion. Now, once he presented himself to His (Thakur's), room ; the atmosphere within was at that time surcharged with the overwhelming influence of the inspiring instructions that He (Thakur) was imparting to the assembled devotees and he could not transcend the atmosphere. Add to all this, the sight of the captivating loveliness and extraordinary lustre of His (Thakur's) countenance charmed down Sj. Anadi's evil motive. And he felt prevailed upon to hear with rapt attention the sweet words of Thakur. Meanwhile He started a discussion on subjects which Anadi Babu had resolved to introduce for debate. He (Thakur) explained them clearly with numerous quotations from Eastern and Western philosophy to the entire satisfaction and utter surprise of the pedant. All his doubts, and arrogance of book learning now passed out of his mind to make room for deep faith and devotion. Hence he had a definite idea of the path of righteousness and resorted to it for the achievement of the supreme end of human life.

Now, the previously-mentioned Umeshchandra Panda

mahasay of Ranigunj had a nephew in a very polite young man of a very religious turn of mind, named Sj. Sambhunath Bhattacharya. He was at that time a student of the Vedanta-philosophy. Once he repaired along with his uncle to "Ganes Mahalla" in order to see Thakur, who then remained absorbed in *samadhi* with outstretched hands. Umes Babu availed himself of this opportunity to place Sambhu Babu on Thakur's lap. The young man, too, passed into ecstasy by association with and the grace of the Great One who had after a while his normal state of mind restored to the devotee. Sj. Sambhunath perhaps looked upon this as a fall from a high pitch of devotion. And so he said to Thakur with regret, "Indeed, I lay immersed in supreme joy. How is it, My Lord, that You bring me down to this level of ordinary existence?" However, the soothing words of Thakur pacified his agitation of mind. And he bade Him (Thakur) good-bye along with the other devotees.

"The plants of grace shall ever live ;
Nature decays but grace must thrive ;
Time, that doth all things else impair,
Still makes them flourish strong and fair."

Thus was the message of Thakur's greatness conveyed to various quarters. And it was not long ere another young man of the name of Sj. Chintamani received the intelligence, which engendered in him an earnest desire for seeking an interview with Thakur. But in order to teach the world through him a lesson as to how agitated an aspirant should feel for reaching his Object of supreme devotion, Thakur indulged in playing with him the game of hide-and-seek. And so Chintamani Babu was baffled in

all his efforts for seeing Thakur. Under the instruction of the other devotees he (Chintamani Babu) took his seat in the very passage along which Thakur would step forth towards the *Ganga* and come back to His room. But it was amazing, indeed, that although the other devotees stationed there could see Thakur, He remained quite invisible to Sj. Chintamani. However, the following day Thakur came within the ken of his vision and talked to the young man like his well-known acquaintance. Still Chintamani Babu was not disillusioned. And so he was not in a position to realize that the Speaker was He whom he (Chintamani Babu) had been seeking so ardently. This state of things subjected him to an impatient yearning after the attainment of the sight of Thakur. This is why He (Thakur) now volunteered to fulfil his long-cherished and long-disappointed hope.

Thus was Thakur passing His days in the holy city, when a devout gentleman of Bindhyachal received the message of the extraordinary traits of His (Thakur's) character. And so he went forth to Benares and communicated to Dr. Priyalall his yearning for seeing Him (Thakur). When the earnestness of the devout soul was brought to the notice of Thakur, he was informed that he need not remain in Benares for the fulfilment of his desire. He (Thakur) gave him a definite assurance through the doctor that he would gain sight of his Object of supreme devotion even at Bindhyachala. Now, inspite of his realization of Thakur's greatness Priyalall Babu could not stifle the desire to ask the new-comer to make a communication to him (Priyalall Babu), when He (Thakur) would deign to reveal Himself before him in

his native place. However, after his return to Bindhyachal the devotee resorted to penance and devotions with the utmost zeal in a secluded place beside the *Ganga* for the achievement of his noble purpose. Time wore on in this way, when one day all his efforts for seeing the divine, luminous form of Thakur were crowned with success. Indeed, with a strange elation of spirits and rapture the blessed soul conveyed to the doctor the wonderful message of the fruition of all his practices and prayers. But it took the doctor by surprise since Thakur was present in Benares at the very time when the devotee, as the account given by him suggested, was accorded the favour of gaining sight of his Desired Object ! Really, he and the other devotees were thrilled with joy when another aspect of Thakur's greatness was thus revealed to them.

After some time Thakur left Ganes Mahalla and took up His quarters in a house near Durga Barhi. It was at such a time that a devotee named Bhupati Babu repaired to His residence along with some gentlemen of a kindred type. Although the noon-day sun was then casting scorching rays, one of them could not resist an inclination to entertain Thakur with sweet music. It continued with unabated zeal till songs on different Deities, such as *Kali*, *Krishna*, *Siva*, *Durga* and so on were intoned. Thakur was dissolved into ecstasies, nay the very complexion of His body was changed into that of the Form of the Deity songs on whom were sung. Indeed, Thakur's career was full of such miracles.

It is difficult for language to describe the sort of mercy and love Thakur showed to His devotees. This will be indicated, to some extent, by the following incidents :

(i) Once His disciple Sj. Umesh Chandra Panda's son was down with a severe type of cholera at the age of four. Eminent physicians were engaged for his medical treatment. But alas ! all of them gave up all hopes of his recovery. Sorely grieved at the sad communication, Sj. Sambhunath approached Thakur with a fervent prayer for the aversion of the calamity that threatened to befall their family. Thakur gave the distressed soul a definite assurance that the child would be cured. This intimation swept off the cloud of sorrow that had settled in the mind of the devotee, since he had unswerving faith in Thakur's word. Indeed, when Sj. Sambhunath went back to his place, he was surprised beyond measure to find that the child was gradually recovering, unaided by medical treatment. Now did he fully realize that it was Thakur's mercy that worked the wonderful, nay mysterious cure.

(ii) On another occasion some discord at home violently assailed the wife of His friend, Sj. Priyalall, and this determined her to go so far as to commit suicide at midnight when there would be none either to oppose or frustrate her design. But the matter did not escape the all-penetrating gaze of the Omniscient Thakur. So, He forthwith presented Himself to the house of the doctor ; and then did He most effectively resist her evil purpose at the critical moment of her life and saved her the dishonour of an inglorious death. Next did the Merciful Lord convey to Priya Babu the message of his wife's marvellous deliverance from an overhanging calamity. The devotee received the intelligence with an expression of surprise not unmixed with joy, but he was ended in

gauging the mystery of His (Thakur's) arrival, since He had not been advised of the danger.

(iii) At one time Dr. Priyalahouse ll's was a place of harbourage for many devotees. Inspite of his straitened pecuniary circumstances he ministered to their needs and comforts to the best of his power. One night, however, his purse was totally exhausted. And this rendered him an easy prey to an overwhelming anxiety as to how he would be able to entertain so many guests. It deprived him of the blessing of even a light slumber and set him rolling over the bed listlessly. Now, Thakur too took up His abode in the same house. Evidently He lay asleep. But a voice called out, "Priya Babu, don't worry ; nothing will impede the achievement of your noble purpose." It appeared to be a communication from God but resembled the voice of Thakur. It excited in the doctor the feelings of surprise and admiration. But he could not stifle the inquisitiveness to enquire if any of the inmates of the room (including Sj. Narendra or Swami Vivekananda) had addressed to him any word. Everybody replied in the negative. At last he approached Thakur to clear away his doubt. But Thakur who was given to keep His True Self veiled in mystery, gave an evasive reply. Still, Sj. Priyalall guessed that the communication had been made by none else but Him. However, the doctor's mind remained occupied exclusively with reflections about the matter till he was invited by a well-to-do man to call at his house for the treatment of a patient. And it goes without saying that Priyalall Babu received from that quarter a sum that was sufficient to remove his want. Now did the devotee fully realize that the words of encouragement

had been addressed to him by Thakur and Thakur alone.

(iv) On another occasion Thakur went on a Saturday along with Sj. Priyalall to attend an invitation at the house of a devotee, when a postman came to his (Sj. Priyalall's) place and called on the doctor to receive a money order addressed to him. But in response to the call Thakur came out of the house to inform the man of the payee's absence. However, the peon agreed to His (Thakur's) proposal to receive the money instead of the doctor ; and so He (Thakur) put His signature on the money order form and had it. But when he (the peon) went back to the post office, the Postmaster drew his (the peon's) attention to the fact that in that form the signature appeared in one place only. So he (the Postmaster) took him to task for his carelessness. This is why the man was compelled to approach Thakur on Monday next for the correction of the mistake. It was readily done. Now, this time too Sj. Priyalall was in urgent need of money. And had not the money order been received by Thakur, he (Sj. Priyalall) would have been exposed to great difficulty. But this time Thakur's efforts for concealing the matter from His friend were frustrated. He (Thakur) could find no subterfuge to explain it away. Great, indeed, was the doctor's surprise, when he thought that the money had been received by his Divine Friend during the period of the Latter's absence from his place and detention in another gentleman's house. So, he approached Thakur with an earnest entreaty to have the puzzle solved. But Thakur remained quite reticent about it. However, to a man of the discernment of Sj. Priyalall

it did not remain incomprehensible that, out of causeless mercy towards him, Thakur had assumed another form for removing his (the doctor's) want. Indeed, there are various other incidents in His life, which are suggestive of His infinite mercy towards His devotees.

As already stated, being the Preacher of the all-embracing doctrine of the Universal Religion, Thakur would duly recognize the standpoints of both *sakarabidis* (the worshippers of the several Forms assumed by (or of the Embodied) *Brahman*) and *nirakarabidis* (the worshippers of the Formless *Brahman*). Indeed, He assigned to them a due place in His doctrine. Now, once He chanced to attend a meeting ; in this meeting one Srimat Satyananda Swami, a pseudo-Vedantist, delivered an alarming speech, ruthlessly condemning the viewpoint of the *sakarabidis* and recommending the audience to cast the revered Image of *Annapurna* into the *Ganga*. At this He (Thakur) felt too pained at heart to remain an indifferent listener of the most insolent, foolish, and criminal speech and an idle watcher of the developments.

He instantly made upto the speaker ; Swami Satyanandaji fell an easy prey to nervousness at the sight of a physiognomy in which unflinching courage was contending with dignity and majesty. Still he mustered up his courage and said, "Who are you ?" At this Thakur replied, "Being a staunch upholder of the *Adwaita-standpoint*, how can you suffer yourself to ask a question that is suggestive rather of ignorance than of wisdom ? Hence I am constrained to remark that true knowledge has not yet dawned on you and that, intoxicated with the arrogance merely of book-learning, you have come here to deliver this lecture !" The

charms of Thakur combined with the irrefutable arguments He advanced against the views adumbrated, nay advocated by the speaker, at once captivated the imagination of the whole assembly. Even Srimat Satyananda felt quite ashamed and discomfited. But Thakur did not stop here and went on, "Is he, who is recommending total disregard for the Image of *Annapurna*, formless? It does not become an embodied being like him to indulge in remarks like these. However, let me see what sort of knowledge about the body has been acquired by him who condemns all forms or bodies or Images) as false." So saying He (Thakur) approached the so-called Vedantist with a lighted match-stick with assumed threat to bring it in contact with Srimat Satyananda's body in order to see, as it were, how far the speaker had realized his form (and hence the form in general) to be false." These simple but forcible remarks struck Srimat Satyananda mute. Then Thakur said in a low voice, "Lord *Samkaracharya* proclaimed His *Adwaita-standpoint* in and through a body or form. Many great souls nowadays reach the knowledge of non-duality or *Brahman* (the Eternal) by the same means. How is it then possible for us to deny absolutely the reality of the 'body or the form'?" Such a marvellous tackling of the problem and skilful handling of the situation were met by a loud applause from the audience. They rejoiced also at the discomfiture of the audacious speaker. Srimat Satyananda too was disillusioned. Now, taking advantage of the uproar that had set in in the assembly, Thakur made good His escape.

Indeed, sectarianism is a thing that gave Thakur much

pain. This is why, contrary to His will and practice, He appeared before the public to denounce the views expressed by Srimat Satyananda—views that were most likely to affect the faith of many ill-cultured, credulous listeners.

It should also be noted here that once during His residence in Benares Thakur took his stand before the window of the verandah floor of the second storey of a house and attended to the recital of the *Koran* performed by some devout Mussalmans. By and by He passed into ecstasy and stood insensible to external objects. Such behaviour of (Thakur) indicated that He appreciated the greatness of all religions.

However, the devotees of Calcutta were greatly oppressed with the pang of their long separation from their Object of supreme devotion. Indeed, they yearned impatiently after a re-union with Him. And so they addressed to Him letters after letters with fervent prayers for His immediate appearance in their midst. This is why Thakur set forth on a journey to Calcutta. On the eve of His departure, however, He conveyed to the devotees of Calcutta a message about His intended journey. The message was cordially welcomed by them.

"Oh, happy servant he,
In such a posture found,
He shall his Lord with rapture see,
And be with honour crowned."

IX

THE DEVOTEES' RE-UNION WITH THAKUR IN CALCUTTA

"When by the mercy of God man is attached to the
Name,

He is lifted up to the greatest heights of spiritual bliss.

.....

Various are the manifestations of God, and various His
ways-

Whatever guise He may assume, He remaining
Consistent with Himself."

Thakur's return to Calcutta was hailed with great rejoicings by the devotees. He now took up His residence in the house of His friend, Sj. Bepinchandra Mitter of *Hogal Kunrhay*. The news of His arrival which event occurred in the Bengali month of Magh, 1299 B. S. (January-February, 1893) flew from mouth to mouth and it was not long ere it reached the several quarters of His adherents. Hence a host of visitors gathered in the holy abode. Among them mention may be made of a *Marhatti Brahman* youth, named Sj. Balaji, a class-mate of devotee Patu Babū. Because of his noble spirit and moral excellence Thakur would call him "pet child". He was afterwards appointed judge in the Baroda State.

Indeed, One of the prominent features of Thakur's career in Calcutta, Nabadwip and Hooghly was His encouragement of *kirttana* (musical performance in praise of God).

and *patha* (recital of religious texts), and *upadesha-dana* (the imparting of religious instructions). Often would He be lost in the rapturous joy of *kirttana*. His hair then would be bristled up ; tears would roll down His eyes incessantly and, as a result, His dress would be moistened ; His limbs would sometimes get lengthened and sometimes shortened ; and His body would tremble so much that the several parts thereof would seem to strike against one another and make a low clattering sound ; at such times both the rows of His teeth too would violently strike against each other ; and, as a result of violent friction, some of them would be broken and some would be reduced to powder. Sometimes He would become totally absorbed in *samadhi* and the bright, golden hue of His body would turn white, dark, blue and so on. These signs of His infinite spiritual wealth would urge His devotees to adore Thakur as the very Embodiment of pure wisdom and pure love. Again, He would relate several instructive stories from the *Puranas* and delineate the character of noble souls. This would ex.cite in Him high emotions which would find vent through horripilation, tears, tremor and so on. Besides, He would impart inspiring instructions on the doctrine of the Universal Religion and become so much overwhelmed with high feelings of love on hearing the Names of *Siva*, *Kali*, *Radha*, *Krishna*, *Gouranga*, *Ram*, *Rahim*, *Allah*, *Jesus*, *Buddha*, and so on that sectarianism would never find room in the hearts of His followers. Hence would they realize the essential unity of all religions.

Now, the importunities of devotees prevailed upon Thakur to start for the blessed Nabadwip on the 29th Falgoon, 1300 B. S. (February-March, 1894). A

friend of the then Station Master (Aghore Babu) of the Nabadwip Steamer Station was well-known to an adherent of Thakur. He addressed to Aghore Babu a letter with a request that he (the Station Master) should deign to take such steps as were sure to minister to the needs and comforts of Thakur after He (Thakur) would alight at the Station. Now, in the course of the journey Thakur picked acquaintance with the Serang of the Steamer known as Mati. Though a Mussalman, Mati was much impressed with Thakur's discourses on religious matters, which did not at all savour of sectarianism nor of communalism. He (the Serang) felt attracted to Him also at the sight of the captivating, lustrous beauty and majesty of His Form. Meanwhile the steamer reached the destination and Aghore Babu extended the most cordial welcome to the Distinguished Passenger and sought earnestly to supply Hiswants.

However, Thakur's descent from the steamer was immediately followed by an ablution in the *Ganga*. Then He directed His steps to the temple of Lord Sri Gouranga. His heart swelled with the high feelings of love, when He saw the Image established by the noble Vishnupriya. But He resisted them with great difficulty and made His way towards Hari-shava in order to observe the Image of the Lord recently founded by Sj. Mathura Babu's father, Sj. Brojanath Vidyaratna. And no sooner had He crossed the precincts of the institution than He became overwhelmed with ecstasies and began to advance with unsteady steps. Tears flowed down His eyes. The accompanying devotees, Trailokya Babu and Ramdayal Babu, took notice of the marked change in Thakur's behaviour and movement.

And lest He (Thakur) should fall down under the overwhelming pressure of the emotions, they held Him from both sides. Now, the worthy son of the devout founder of the Image had been absorbed in meditation after the termination of his noon-day services to the Lord. And as soon as Thakur halted and took His stand in the *nat-mandir* the noble soul opened his eyes ; just then he saw Thakur overpowered with high feelings inspired by the consciousness of His oneness with Lord *Sri Gouranga*. Besides, he was charmed with the enchanting loveliness and lustre of His (Thakur's) Form and said in a state of ecstasy, "O *Gour*, hast Thou come again ?"

However, when the normal state of mind was restored to Mathura Babu, he prostrated himself at the holy feet of Thakur. At this Thakur evidently felt abashed and said to the devoted servant of *Sri Sri Gouranga Deva*, "Whom do you term *Gouranga* ? I am Nityagopal". This pronouncement was followed by compliments being tendered by Thakur to the supremely devout spirit in which Mathura Babu dedicated himself to the service of the Lord. Thus complimented by his Honoured Guest, the devotee felt very shy and with a downcast face made for the temple with the object of opening the door thereof, so that Thakur might see the Image. Thakur, however, sought to resist him with the remark that Lord *Sri Gouranga* was then taking rest after His noon-day meal. And so He should not be disturbed. At these words Mathura Babu said, "The Great Lord will see Himself. So the question of the violation of the rules of service does not arise here." With this he unbolted the door to allow Thakur and the devotees the opportunity to see

the Image inside. The sight thrilled them with excessive joy.

Then Thakur retraced His steps to the steamer station ; here Aghore Babu was awaiting His return with the utmost eagerness, since he had made preparations for entertaining Thakur and His followers with dainty dishes. But sore was his (Aghore Babu's) disappointment, when he found his reverend Guest bent upon availing Himself of a special steamer from Katwa, that was expected to reach the Nabadwip station in no time. However, Thakur quieted his agitated feelings with some soothing words of consolation. Then did He ascend the vessel in company with His adherents after taking leave of His host with distinguished courtesy.

On reaching Calcutta Thakur stepped forth to Sj. Bepin Mitter's house, which was soon encumbered with a vast confluence of devotees. Thus was it packed to overflowing. This caused a good deal of inconvenience to the visitors. But great, indeed, was their attachment for Thakur. And so, urged by an irrepressible desire for enjoying His inspiring society, they courted all sorts of hardships that threatened to obstruct their passage to and residence in the holy place and association with their Object of supreme devotion and love. Now, Thakur's eyes were always open to the extremely inconvenient situation in which His devotees had been placed. So He felt it indispensably necessary to transfer His residence to a more accommodating house. After a careful search the devotees found one near the Yorabarhi Mansion at Kalighat. It evidently suited their purpose to a considerable extent. Circumstances, however, compelled them to abandon this place

too and choose one at Pathuriapati in the vicinity of Goddess *Kali*'s temple on the 12th Falgun, 1300 B.S. (February, 1894). This house was quite congenial to the devotees. It could give shelter to the assemblage of visitors; indeed, they gathered here to place their offerings of flowers and other ingredients at the holy feet and present Him with various articles of worship. They passed their time very happily in enjoying *kirtanas* and the ambrosia of instruction that was poured out from the divine mouth of Thakur. On the other hand, the songs the devotees would sing in praise of God would dissolve Thakur into ecstasies which were not suffered to slacken their hold on Him, even if He spent the whole night in this condition.

"Lord, in Thy love I yet behold
An undiminished store,
A depth unmeasured and untold,
A sea without a shore."

Indeed, it is not only human beings on whom Thakur's blessings were showered but beasts also partook of them. This is borne out by the following event :

Once He went forth to the *Ganga* for ablution, when a dog sank at the holy feet with groans and piteous howls. The cries of distress quite easily appealed to the heart of the Merciful Thakur ; He placed His hallowed foot on the head of the afflicted animal and alleviated its suffering. And it was amazing, indeed, that the dog, relieved of its pain, began to lick the revered feet ; and thus, as it were, it showed its gratitude to its Saviour and sought to requite the benefit conferred on it. Ah ! what a miracle was worked by the grace of the Supreme Lord ! The dog had, to all appearance, been deprived of its physical strength

under the tyranny of an acute, painful disease ; but it was in no time restored to the vigorous use of its limbs. And so it swam with unwearied zeal across the strong current of the *Ganga* in flood-tide.

It becomes us to mention here that while Thakur was residing at Kalighat, an indigent but noble soul named Sj. Akshay Kumar Guin, who belonged to the village of Amlagura in the district of Midnapur, once happened to hear of the infinite spiritual wealth and Lordly powers, that belonged to Thakur, from a neighbour who was a disciple of His. The portrayal of the holy career of the *Guru*, though brief, proved quite stimulating and inspiring to the listener. And so he was subject to overwhelming feelings which laid him unconscious on the ground. It evidently left an abiding impression on his mind. And he dreamt one night that a Divine Man of a white complexion was initiating him with holy formulæ into the path of liberation by observing certain rites. He then condescended to smear the devotee's body with ashes. Akshay Babu marvelled to see that waves of super-earthly loveliness were dancing about in the sea of His luminous form. Then with a gesture from Him a devotee offered Akshay Babu a quantity of *prosada*.

Now did an unquenchable thirst for meeting with Thakur laid hold on the poor man. So, regardless of all sufferings, he set out for Kalighat. And on reaching his destination with great difficulty, he became so overwhelmed with emotions that he sank unconscious on the ground. This arrested the attention of his beloved neighbour (who was then residing at Kalighat) ; and so he nursed him back to consciousness. Now did Akshay Babu communicate to

his friend his desire for seeing Thakur. It was forthwith fulfilled. And on being ushered into the holy presence, the blessed visitor found before him the same Form as had been revealed to him in his dream state. This thrilled him with raptures not unmixed with wonder. And he shed tears of joy. However, the Omniscient Thakur once had, of His own accord, enquired of his (Sj. Akshay's) neighbour (who was evidently then residing at Kalighat) if Akshay Babu was expected to be at Kalighat. But because of his ignorance of the matter the gentleman could give no satisfactory reply to His (Thakur's) enquiry.

Be that as it may, the new-comer was mightily surprised to mark then a sudden change in Thakur's form. Indeed, there was no more that Divine Man of white complexion who had been sitting there a while before. There appeared in His stead One of a bright golden hue ; and He addressed Akshay Babu in sweet accents of love so as to quiet his agitation of mind. However, the following was a day of great rejoicing to the blessed soul, inasmuch as his desire for initiation was fulfilled. But he was overwhelmed with joy and wonder, when he found Thakur solemnising exactly such ceremonies as **He** had been observed performing in his dream-state ; nay Sri Sri Nitya Deva initiated him with the same formula as **He** had muttered into his ear in dream. But the only item, that was found wanting, was His (Thakur's) smearing his body with ashes. However, on enquiry Akshay Babu learnt that Thakur had tried to secure ashes but none could supply them. Now, the causeless mercy and supreme love that so marvellously characterised Thakur's behaviour with him, inspired in the devotee unflinching faith in Him. Indeed, he then firmly believed

that He (Thakur) was none else other than the Supreme *Brahman* (the Eternal) who had incarnated Himself for the redemption of the fallen, and the distressed.

Verily, the causeless mercy of Thakur was, on one occasion, shown to a drunkard who was once at early dawn found lying enfeebled under the influence of dead drunkenness in a drain. Two gentlemen raised him and threatened to hand him over to the police. Thus were they resolved to take serious steps against him ; just then a devotee of Thakur, who was walking about along with the *Guru* in the vicinity of *Kali*'s temple, volunteered to deliver the unfortunate victim of their wrath from the clutches of those men. As he (the devotee) intervened, he was informed that the wretch had become a source of extreme annoyance and irritability to them by his outrageous conduct, villainy and lewdness. However, at his request they relaxed their severity to and hold upon the poor fellow. Then Thakur asked the *bhakta* (devotee) to lead him to the *Ganga* for a bath and then to his residence. Now, when the devotee washed his body, the drunkard held the holy thread, that lay girt round his waist and hence invisible ; and then he (the drunkard) began to mutter some holy formulæ. At this the *bhakta* was surprised and said, "Are you a Brahmana ?" Then the Brahmana held his helper by the right hand and said with tears in his eyes, "Would you be kind enough to answer a few questions of mine ? Who is the Man that stood by you ? Who is the Man who saved me the disgrace of a severe punishment at the hands of police ? Who is the Man under whose benign influence I have felt prevailed upon to mutter *Gayatri* (a sacred verse from the *Vedas* to

be recited by the twice-born at least three times every day); although I swerved from the high task for a period of thirty years ? Who is the Man who revealed Himself in a majestic, divine form in the *Anahatapadma* (twelve-petalled, mystic lotus) in my heart ? Who is the Man who infused strength into my mind after taking His stand in the *Ganga* in a luminous form ? Please answer my questions or I shall knock you down with a stroke of my fist." These questions affected the *bhakta* with horripilation and led to a conference between the two, when Thakur made His appearance there. As soon as the Brahmana saw Him he could not resist the impulse to prostrate himself at the holy feet. Now, the place having been crowded, Thakur went away. And the devotee traced His steps along with the Brahmana. By and by they reached a tree under the shade of which they took their seats. On enquiry Thakur learnt that he (the Brahmana) was not a resident of the city. An urgent piece of business had brought Him down to Calcutta. And being a whore-monger, He had taken up His residence in an adjoining brothel. But, he went on, the grace of Thakur had brought a villain like him under the shelter of His holy feet. So saying he surrendered himself to His (Thakur's) mercy. And Thakur stretched His generous and gracious hands to the depressed soul. Aha ! did the man then think, "Sin and Satan have striven to rend my soul from Thee, my God ! But ever-lasting is Thy love" ?

Riddling terms that would at times appear in Thakur's conversation with people would challenge the ingenuity of a hearer to divine their meaning or reference. This will be amply borne out by the following event : Once Thakur

paid a visit to the house of one Sj. Madhusudan Bhattacharya of Kalighat ; there He fell to talk to a devout Vaishnava named Vishnupriya Vallabha Dass Babaji mahasaya. This Vaishnava was a disciple of Chaitanya Dass Babaji mahasaya who was alleged to have reached perfection in devotional practices. In the course of the conversation the Babaji said to Thakur, "Are you married ?"

Thakur replied, "Yes, sir."

Babaji : "Have you got children ?"

Thakur : "Yes, sir. I have got a son and a daughter."

Babaji : "What are the names of your children and wife ?"

Thakur : "The son is called "*Jnana* (wisdom)" and the daughter "*Bhakti* (devotion)." And the exquisitely beautiful bride or wife I have obtained by the grace of the *Guru*, who played the part of a go-between or match-maker in the matrimonial alliance, has been accommodated with jealous care in the inmost-recess of the heart."

The Babaji, though he had at first failed to comprehend the spirit of Thakur's utterances, could eventually appreciate it. And hence he addressed Thakur as a *Bala-Brahmachari* (One who was devoted to continence and celibacy from the very boyhood). However, Thakur elucidated the riddle to His disciples thus : "By the term '*Ghatak* or go-between' I mean 'the practices observed through the grace of the *Guru*' ; and by the term 'wife' I mean 'perfection'." However, we feel inclined to deal here with the following points too :

There was a time when Thakur would always remain in

an indrawn mood and hence insensible to the objects of the outer world, nay immersed in ecstasy and absorbed in *samadhi*. Besides, mostly would He talk and behave like a child. Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva could not look unconcernedly on this matter. This is why He (Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva) once said to His well-known, noble devotee, Sreejukta Gouri Devi (better known as mother Gouri), "O Gouri, if thou doest not wait upon and look after Nitya, His life will be exposed to danger." These words of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva prevailed upon her to shoulder eagerly the responsibility that thus devolved upon her. She also discharged it quite zealously and efficiently. We have a definite idea thereof from the following communication she made to her colleague and friend, Sreejukta Ambica Sundari Devi, a disciple of Thakur and daughter of Annada Prasanna Sen, Esqr., late translator, Judge's Court, Barisal (Bengal) :

"When thy Thakur would remain totally forgetful of His own Self (or Body or personal needs), I alone would guard and protect Him. Thy Thakur would remain always in a state of absorption in *samadhi*. I would then attend and minister to His needs by providing His food and all that. He could not employ His hand in taking morsels of rice. I would feed Him. Sometimes He would run about after me like a little child. Hola ! how Great He was ! What a wonderful Man He was ! How can I delineate a picture of His indescribable behaviour and sports ? His ways were mysterious. Nityagopal and Ramakrishna were none else other than *Gour-Nitai* and *Krishna-Balaram*. Ah ! how happy, indeed, we were at that time ! On some days He would go to bathe but would

not leave water ; at the same time He would remain absorbed in ecstasy. Ah ! His very attitude would remind me of *SriKrishna's lila* (sports) in Brindaban. He would, as it were, indulge in it ; nay He seemed to represent the character of *SriKrishna*. Indeed, when I would fail in all my efforts for inducing Him to come out of water, I would be compelled to run, club in hand, at Him with (of course, assumed) threats. Then He would sometimes move away with a giggle to a greater distance. Sometimes, however, He would cast on me bewildered and pathetic looks and keep gazing at me like a boy frightened with the admonition or chastisement of the mother and then come up. I would thereupon substitute very carefully a dry piece of cloth for His wet one. In fact, He would pay heed to nobody else's warning (or advice or admonition or remonstrances). Ambica, my darling, thou hast obtained the grace of a very Great One. Thy Thakur was a Supreme Lover, nay Love incarnate. O Ambica, induce me no more to hold talks on these matters ; they subject me to overpowering emotions which may affect all my activities and render me quite unpractical and worthless ! Oh ! stop, stop. Oh artless, pet child of Nitya, go, go to bed now. Don't worry about your separation from your Thakur. Ah ! guileless soul, do you think that your *Guru* was an ordinary individual ? Do you think that the termination of His earthly career has brought about His death ? Oh ! They are Ever-existent. They are Perpetual. Make a search in your heart with fervour and devotion and you shall find Him there !"

Now, it was not only the righteous *Gouri Devi* who highly complimented the supremacy of Thakur but also

the devoted, noble wife of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva, the blessed Sarada Devi, appreciated His incomprehensible greatness in a remarkable degree. The remarks she made about it in her conversations with the previously-mentioned Sreejukta Ambica Sundari bore a glowing testimony to that and were most indelibly fixed on her (Sj. Ambica Sundari's) memory. This noble Sarada Devi, although she remained deeply devoted to the service of her Divine Husband, could not feel, as is the characteristic of real *bhaktas*, contented with her position in the realm of righteousness, as it were. This is why perhaps she said once to Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva, "Ah ! You are above all desires, cravings and needs, indeed. But I have not yet been able to transcend them. How shall I then pass my days peaceably ? I, therefore, want something with which I may remain profitably occupied, nay which may prove to be a perennial source of inspiration to me." By chance the eyes of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva fell at that time on Thakur who was sitting nearby in a state of absorption in *samadhi*. Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva picked Him up and placed Him on her lap and said, "Here do I accord you the privilege of utilizing your life ; accept Gopal and serve Him ; then you will be able to pass your time happily and well." A blessing conferred on her so mercifully by Her Divine Husband subjected the pure-souled Sarada Devi to overpowering emotions. Indeed, she, a generous lady of exemplary character, readily developed for Thakur deep motherly love under the elevating influence of the holy association (with Him). Thenceforward she would often feed Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva with her own hand in the

attitude of an affectionate mother. She would also occasionally send money to Kalighat (Calcutta) Mahanirvan math in order to have it dedicated to the noble cause of His service. Even Thakur's holy photo enjoyed her loving care as the most beloved object.

It should be noted in this connection that Sj. Giris Chandra Ghosh pointed out both Thakur and Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva to his son, Sj. Dani Babu, and asked him, "To whom do you feel more attracted ?" Sj. Dani Babu replied, "To Nitya Babu." Hence he was initiated by Thakur. And so deep was his devotion to Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva that whenever, since his initiation, he would be required to act a new part, he would first play it before Thakur ; and then would he go to the stage with the blessing of the *Guru* on the crown of his head. This is why he reached the loftiest position among his contemporaries, although he was not at all endowed with learning. Once, while speaking about Thakur to some gentleman, he said, "When money would be presented to Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva, His hand would spontaneously bend and shrink from it (from fear or disgust). But He (Thakur) would have money in the fold of His cloth at the waist ; still He would be absorbed in *samadhi*." Now, to *Avatars* (the Incarnations of God) and Great Men in the sphere of righteousness the canons of Logic cannot be applied. It is impossible for human beings (however learned they may be) of limited understanding and deluded reason to gauge the mystery in which Their conduct and behaviour remain veiled. Different *Avatars* behave in different ways. Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva would recoil from money ; evidently He sought thus to teach the ignorant people of the world

the lesson that money, when suffered to get the upper hand of a man, breeds many evils and may ultimately prove ruinous to his moral and spiritual life. But it should never be inferred from His behaviour that He had not realized, by the light of divine wisdom, the unsubstantiality and transitoriness of the things of the world and hence was afraid of being affected by them. The conduct and behaviour of Thakur, on the other hand, bear a glowing testimony to the fact that a Man of supreme, divine wisdom and 'inborn Self-realization remains quite unaffected in all conditions. Indeed, nothing on Earth, however alluring and deluding it may prove to ignorant men (i.e. men who have not realized God and attained the light of divine wisdom) can exert the least influence upon Him. He lords it over *Maya* ; and *Maya* is always at the beck and call of and serves Him as a slave.

Now, it was during this period that a Bengali drama entitled '*Chaitanya lila*' was being enacted at the Star Theatre, Calcutta, with great eclat. Once, at the earnest entreaty of Sj. Amritalal Bose, the proprietor of the theatre, Thakur presented Himself to the same along with His *bhaktas* to witness the representation. Now, when Thakur would hear the Name of God, a stream of tears would flow forth from His eyes ; nay His whole being would be swept by a storm of divine emotions ; could He remain unaffected on observing that performance ? Indeed, He was absorbed in an intense spiritual mood in a moment and moved on in a state of divine inebriation towards the stage ; in fact, nothing could obstruct His passage to the same. And after jumping on it (the stage), He began to dance in divine ecstasy. It proved to be a very charming scene, indeed.

The spectators marvelled to see it. Even dancing masters of the eminence and standing of Kasi Babu and Nepal Babu imitated the soul-bewitching gesticulations manifested in the ecstatic dance. Subsequently did they dance in that manner on the stage ; and this secured them a greater degree of fame. However, Thakur passed a pretty long time in that state of inebriation. And when He regained consciousness of the outer world, the actors set themselves quite ardently and reverently the task of waiting upon and serving Him for alleviating His weariness. Then they earnestly entreated to be accorded the privilege and favour of entertaining Him with some refreshment and obtaining thereafter His holy *prosada*. It is said that Thakur took that night five rupees worth of betels. Thus did He gratify the desire of the actors of the Star Theatre.

However, Thakur's character proved charming to Pandit Sj. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar too. This is indicated by the following lines :

On the occasion of a grand festivity Thakur was cordially invited by Sj. Mahendra Nath Gupta (also known as Sj. 'M.'), the distinguished author of the well-known Bengali work entitled "SriRamakrishnakathamrita (subsequently translated by Srimat Swami Nikhilananda as 'The Gospel of SriRamkrishna')," to grace his residence with His holy presence. Pandit Sj. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar too was present there on the festival day. Sj. Mahendra Babu* introduced Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva to the Pandit,

*However, we feel inclined to quote here the following lines (without making any remark whatsoever about them) from "The Gospel of SriRamkrishna" ('originally recorded in Bengali by Sj. 'M.', but translated by Srimat Swami Nikhilananda') in order

saying, "Sir, you see, here sits a *Sadananda* (always happy or Ever-cheerful, (*here, evidently*) the Embodiment of Eternal Bliss) *Purusha* (Man)." Now, Thakur, who knew the heart of a man, readily grasped the purport of the master's compliment. But He would not suffer, as was His wont, anybody and everybody to have an inkling into His greatness. He was also well-versed in the art of concealing His true Self. So, He said to Sj. Iswarchandra, "We often find beside the *Ganga* a steamer named 'Bhagirathi.' She (the *Ganga*) is also called 'Bhagirathi'. As the former 'Bhagirathi' can in no way stand in comparison with the *Latter*, so I, who am being represented as *Sadananda*, can in no way be likened to *Shiva*, the Supreme Lord, to whom the term (*Sadananda*) is very usually and quite rightly applied." The object, with which Thakur quite tactfully addressed those words to Sj. Vidyasagar, was well-attained, since he (Sj. Iswarchandra) corroborated them with the remark, "Yes, Sir, as I am represented as Vidyasagar

that the reader may have some idea as to how Thakur has been represented by Steejut Mahendia Babu to appear to some of His contemporaries including himself :

"Nityagopal's chest glowed with the upsurge of emotion..... Looking at Nityagopal, the Master (*Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva*) said to the devotees, "He is in a lofty mood.".....Nityagopal, who was twenty three or twenty four years old and unmarried, was like a child. His mind was always soaring in the spiritual realm. He visited the Master sometimes alone and sometimes in Ram's company. The Master had observed the spiritual state of his mind and had become very fond of him. He remarked now and then that Nityagopal was in the state of a Paramahamsa.....He (*Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva*) was always in ecstasy. He sat there in silence. Master (to Nityagopal, smiling): "Gopal ! why are you always silent ?" Nityagopal answered like a child, "I-do-not-know....."

(which means 'the sea of learning')." But for some reason or other the Pandit felt attracted to Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. And so he would often pay Him visits thence-forward and feel interested in holding talks with Him on various subjects.

Now, Thakur was passing His days at Kalighat, when at the most cordial invitation of an acquaintance, one Sj. Pramada Charan Mitter, He took up His residence for a time in his garden-house ; hence, however, He once vanished suddenly. This mysterious disappearance of Thakur caused extreme mental anguish to Sj. Pramada Charan ; indeed, he construed it as an evil and

Nityagopal was also in an ecstatic mood.....Master : "Well ! you haven't been to Dakshineswar for a long time." Nityagopal : "True, sir, I haven't been able to go there. I haven't been well. I have had pains all over my body." Master : "How are you now ?" Nityagopal : "Not so well, sir." Master : "Bring your mind down one or two notes." Nityagopal : "I don't like people's company".....Master : "That's only natural. Who lives with you ?" Nityagopal : "Tarak (later known as Swami Shivananda, late President, Belur Math). He is always with me....." After a while he (*Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva*) said : "Art thou come ? I too am here." Who could pretend to understand these words ?.....Nityagopal has a feminine nature. Therefore, while he is in a spiritual mood his body becomes distorted and twisted ; it becomes flushed..... Manilal Mallik, an old member of the Brahmo Samaj,.....said that Shivanath admired Nityagopal's spiritual state. Nityagopal was always in an exalted spiritual mood.....M : "Gopal (referring to Thakur) is in an exalted state of mind, isn't he ?.....So much emotion, so much weeping and such exaltation in the name of God !.....the Master used to say, 'Gopal is in the state of a paramahamsa'....." Narendra : ".....'Gopal has spiritual realizations, no doubt', the Master said to me, 'but he has attained them all of a sudden, without the necessary preparations.....'"

ascribed it to his bad luck. He made careful searches for ascertaining the whereabouts of Thakur ; just then, to his utter surprise, he came across the Object of his supreme love in a secluded place far removed from human habitation. He burst into a passion of sorrow and most earnestly requested His (Thakur's) return to his garden-house ; he also craved, in a spirit of deep humility, for His (Thakur's) forgiveness for any offence Pramada Babu might have given Him. Thakur quieted his beating heart with soothing words of consolation thus, "You are not at all to blame for the steps I was compelled to take. It does not become a Sannyasin to partake every day of rich dishes. Besides, there resides in the garden-house another Sannyasin. Although he professes himself to be an upholder of the *adwaita-standpoint* with the pronouncements, "I am *Brahman* (the Eternal), I am *Brahman*", he has not yet reached the consciousness of non-duality. Had he indulged in such professions and proclamations after achieving the knowledge of *Brahman*, his utterances would have proved extremely beneficial to the world. But indulgence in such pronouncements unblessed with the attainment of the knowledge of unity with the Supreme, is sure to breed harms. And hence knowing it quite wrong to keep company with such a Sannyasin, I have abandoned the garden-house. So, please, do not grieve on this account".

At this Sj. Pramadacharan said with regret, "How shall we fare, unless You deign to bless us with Your mercy ?" Thakur replied, "He, to whom mercy will be shown, will win it, even if he dwells in the cave of a mountain. Don't worry about it."

X

THE SECOND VISIT TO NABADWIP

"Having come to Me, these Mahatmas come not again to birth, the place of pain, non- eternal ; they have gone to the highest bliss." (15)

Gita, Eighth Discourse.

Thakur was thus passing His days in Calcutta and the suburbs, when perhaps He recalled His past career at Nabadwip. And it was not long ere He set out for the holy place along with a *bhakta*. But on His arrival at Kalna He encountered a difficulty in continuing His journey in the steamer and was hence compelled to get into a boat bound for Nabadwip. Now, among the passengers of the boat there were some gentlemen of whom mention may be made of one Sj. Dwarakanath Goswami who belonged to Jessor. For reasons best known to him the Goswami felt inclined to say to Thakur, "Sir, how is it that You wear no string of beads or rosary ?" Thakur replied, "I am not worthy of it. But if anybody wears it, I do not object to that ; rather I rejoice at it". This short conference was followed by Thakur's dissolution into ecstasies. The sight made a deep impression on the devout Vaishnava who felt prevailed upon to say to Thakur, "You are like the moon that dispels the gloom laying hold on the world ; whereas the other people are like the stars." He then told his companions, "No.

more am I needful of going forth to Nabadwip ; here do I observe Lord *Gouranga* Himself." Such a zealous observation on the part of the Goswami proved extremely inspiring to his friends who had their eyes riveted on the charms of Thakur.

Now, when Thakur set forth towards Nabadwip (on the 2nd Chaitra (March), 1300 B.S.), the birth anniversary of the Blessed Lord *Chaitanya Deva* was going to be celebrated there with great pomp and show. This attracted a vast concourse of pilgrims to the sacred place. The atmosphere was kept reverberating by the usual tumult and loud songs in praise of the Supreme Lord. However, the Zemindar of Ahmedpur, Sj. Sripada Chowdhuri, addressed a letter to the then Station Master of the Nabadwip steamer station, Sj. Kali Babu, with a request that he (Kali Babu) would take a keen personal interest in the cause of supplying the needs of Thakur. Indeed, this was the first time in his life that the Station Master came into touch with the *Guru*. But it will appear later on how this acquaintance was followed in no time by quite unexpectedly happy results. Indeed, Kali Babu was very much charmed on that very day with the words Thakur addressed to him ; and so he spent an incredibly long time in the conference, quite forgetful of his environment, as it were. And it was the peremptory call of an unavoidable duty that awakened him the next morning at about 9 A.M., from the slumber of fascination to the realities of the situation. Thakur accepted his hospitality for that day. And then did He make for the town the next day to take up His quarters in Ramchandra Saha's house that was hired for His residence.

"Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my heart and let it be
Full saturated, Love, with Thee.
Take my eyes and let them be
Intoxicated, God, with Thee.
Take my hands and let them be
For ever sweating, Truth, for Thee."

Then, one winter night in the Bengali month of Magha (January-February) Sj. Dharmadas Roy, a well-known devout, young man of extraordinary parts of the then Nabadwip, took up his couch in a room destined at least for that night for the exclusive accommodation of the devotee. It was rendered dark by the removal of the light. He had himself wrapped up fully, as was his wont, in a quilt and remained in a posture of repose that serves to invite sleep. But lo! the gloom that had settled in the room was scared away by the sudden onrush of the streams of an extraordinarily brilliant light. Owing to its mysterious visit and overwhelming splendour, this light was attributed to a super-human agency. It exerted such an overpowering influence that Dharmadas Babu felt prevailed upon to remove the quilt from his face. But he saw unforeseen objects. A strange awe now fell upon him and his eyes closed. And there appeared in his forehead a third eye, as it were. It was this eye that enabled him to observe before him a Great Man ; His form was endowed with divine beauty, loveliness and lustre. He had just behind Him a figure ; his head was furnished with matted hair and neck decorated with garlands which are the characteristic and

distinguishing marks of several sects. This latter was followed by a shaven-headed *Sadhu* (righteous man of renunciation), who bore a religious staff in one hand and an earthen or wooden water-pot in the other (well-known as a *Dandi*).

Now, the Great One just in front of devotee Dharmadas was robed in a piece of coloured cloth of woven silk. There was another piece of the same kind thrown loosely over the upper part of the body. His complexion was extraordinarily white, and He resembled Lord *Gouranga* in form and loveliness. He held in His hand a *Tulasi* leaf which was inscribed with a vermilion *Vija-mantra* (a mystical letter or syllable used as short for a *mantra* or a prayer formula); He said to Dharmadas Babu, "Here is the *Vija* (mystical letter) of the *mantra* regarding your *Ishta Devata* (Chosen Deity)". So saying the Great One vanished and the other two *Sadhus* too disappeared along with Him. But the *Tulasi* leaf lay in the devout Dharmadasa's hand. The miraculous event was followed by a loud outcry on the part of the devotee. This served to startle his grand mother who hurried with great concern into the room. And in the light she supplied, he marvelled to see the leaf, which he welcomed and revered and treasured up in an amulet as a token of the causeless mercy of "*Sri Guru*" (the Blessed Spiritual Master and Guide).

The attainment of an object, so mystic and wonderful and so suggestive of the infinite grace of the Supreme, subjected devotee Dharmadas to never-ending reflections. It also developed in him an impatient yearning after the attainment of the sight of the One who, out of causeless mercy, had so miraculously initiated him, and whose

form was so full of divine beauty and loveliness and lustre !

However, one auspicious morning an esteemed friend of his, Dr. Sj. Devendranath Mukhopadhyaya, conveyed to him a message as regards the arrival of an Extraordinary, Wonderful Man ; he (Deven Babu) also spoke to Dharmadas Babu about His amazing conduct and behaviour.

This Man, the devout doctor added, had taken up His quarters in the house of late Ramchandra Saha, a few paces off from devotee Dharmadasa's place. The communication solemnly madē by a man of the type of Dr. Deven Babu awakened in Sj. Dharmadas Babu an uncontrollable curiosity to see the "Man". Accordingly at the time fixed the two friends started for their desired destination. And on reaching it, Deven Babu led him on to a room at the western extremity of which there appeared a *Babu* (gentleman) robed in a piece of cloth furnished with black borders. He assumed a seat made of the skin of a deer, adjoining to which there lay a pair of slippers of the same stuff. He received devotee Dharmadas with an air of dignified hospitality and respectful ceremony. Dr. Deven Babu bowed profoundly to Him. Sj. Dharmadas Roy too followed the example of his friend. But what proved amazing and impressive to the devout Roy was a halo of light radiating from His head. This served to remind him of the streams of light that had previously illuminated his room. Then did he recognise the "Man", though differently attired. Overwhelmed with wonder and inexpressible feelings of joy and devotion, Dharmadas Babu

stood with his eyes riveted on the Desired Object ; they (the eyes) seemed to delight to lose themselves in the captivating beauty of the form. Now did the Great One say to Sj. Roy giggling, "Dhamai, I am He." So saying He became absorbed in *samadhi* ; whereas the devotee, who would usually be called 'Dhamai' by his relations and friends, was, as it were, bathed in profuse, incessant perspiration. Of the bhaktas assembled there some fanned the Great One (who was evidently none else than "Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva") and some Dharmadas Babu.

On the normal state being restored, Guru Jnanananda Deva talked to him in the attitude of a well-known acquaintance and referred to the mystic *Tulasi leaf* he had attained. The Yogacharya then proceeded to pass some remarks with which the devotee's tendencies, inclinations and conduct of early years marvellously tallied. These filled him with admiration and amazement. These also awakened in him the conviction that Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva had, since his birth, been watching his conduct invisibly like his Protecting Deity.

Another thing, which too struck him much, was that the Yogacharya dealt with whatever thoughts passed in or crossed his mind. Guru Jnanananda Deva then appeared to be dissolved into ecstasies and uttered the Name of "*Hari* (God)" in the pose and attitude and with the simplicity of a child. Would Thakur thus indicate that

"The *praising of His Name* is the highest of all practices.

It has upraised many a human soul.

It slakes the desire of the restless mind,

And imparts an all-seeing vision.

To a man of praise Death loses all its terrors :

He feels all his hopes fulfilled ;
His mind is cleared of all impurities ;
And is filled with the ambrosial Name.” ?

Now, among the devotees that then assembled in the room there was one who brought in some sweets which the revered *Guru Deva* distributed among the *bhaktas* and partook of Himself. Then He said lispingly, "Mother is scolding Me ! She will now lull Me to sleep ! So do you now go home." The devotees felt it their highest religious duty to yield implicit and ready obedience to Him. Hence the order was most devoutly carried out. Indeed,

"The words spoken by the *Guru* are holiest hymns ;
They are priceless gems and jewels.
He who listens to them and guides his life by them
is saved ;
He saves others as well.
His heart being imbued with the love of God,
His life is fruitful, and fruitful his touch.
He is greeted with paeans of victory and celestial
anthems,
And as his heart thrills to them he calls on God in
response.
God radiates from the brow of this saint ;
And all who follow him are saved."

Now, at the time when this incident happened, three individuals of Nabadwip, Dr. Deven Babu, Station Master Sj. Kalidas Sarkar and Sj. Dharmadas Roy, were blessed with the *refuge* under the sheltering wings of the Yogacharya's grace. These devout souls would often hold discourses on the greatness of and their experiences about

the mysterious behaviour and activities of our revered *Guru Deva*. Hence it transpired that Sj. Kalidas Sarkar, in compliance with the request of a Zemindar of Amedpur, named Sj. Sripada Chowdhury, accommodated Him one night in the station on the eve of the great festival held in honour of Lord *Sri Sri Gouranga Deva*; He was then bent upon proceeding towards the holy place. The first meeting was attended with a sweet conversation; this inspired in the Station Master the firm belief that he had been most intimately known to Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva for a long time, as it were. But what surprised him most was His reference to some details about his domestic affairs, such as the number of sons he had and the disease of epilepsy his wife had fallen a victim to. Things like these proved extremely inspiring and enchanting to Sj. Kalidas Sarkar. And he entertained Him the next day in the quarters assigned to him with the strictest and most devout observance of the rules of hospitality. Now, while the Yogacharya was staying there, a Vaishnava sang an idyll on the sports of cattle-pasture by Lord *Sri Krishna*. The song dissolved Him into ecstasies so much that tears rolled down His eyes incessantly. His cloth was drenched. And the ground under His feet was so much soaked that it seemed to be besprinkled with mud. It was the most amazing sight which none could see unconcernedly. It tallied with the delineation in "*Chaitanya Bhagabata*" of the overpowering accession of divine emotions which would often visit *Sri Sri Gouranga Deva*. Hence the devotees felt prevailed upon to have a definite idea and knowledge about the "Great Man."

It should also be noted in this connection that towards

the evening following the happiest day that marked the beginning of the transitional period in Sj. Dharmadasa's life, the three noble souls of Nabadvip presented themselves to the holy *abode*. They were conducted to the holy presence of the Yogacharya. He subsequently dealt with various religious subjects including the *Puranas* and even the *Vedanta*. He also stressed the importance of holding in high regard the "lilas" (the earthly careers and sports and pastimes of *Avatars* or Incarnations) of God. He asserted too that the Supreme manifests Himself in various forms. Now, the intensity of interest the devotees took in the discourses rendered them quite heedless of the expiration of the night and the rising of the morning in unclouded splendour. Then some articles of food were offered to Him and the holy leavings of His meals were distributed among the assembled devotees.

Now, the supreme, devoted attachment of Sj. Dharmadasa for Guru Jnanananda Deva rendered him indifferent to household affairs which suffered greatly on that account. And hence some designing men made malicious reports against him to his father, Sj. Matilal Roy. And so, after his arrival at home he (Matilal Babu) held himself obliged to demand a satisfactory explanation from his son about his conduct. He (Matilal Babu) also urged him to justify his action and submit a clear statement as to the 'Man' whom he had chosen as his *Guru*. Such a pressure from his father subjected the young man to nervousness, no doubt. But the deep faith he had in the revered *Guru Deva* enabled him to summon up his courage and rouse up his soul to say, "If, after seeing Him, you feel that I have tendered my allegiance to an unworthy object, I shall quite

unhesitatingly cease paying my respects to Him". Words uttered with so much confidence proved impressive to the devotee's father. And so he desired an interview with Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. At this Sj. Dharmadas communicated the message to Him. On hearing this Thakur sent forth a roar of laughter and assured him of the moral excellence and intrinsic worth of his father ; He also bade him usher Mati Babu into His presence in the evening. This was done. But it was amazing, indeed, that the sight of the divine, luminous form attracted a ready, profound bow from him (Mati Babu) ; this also charmed down his intention to subject His conduct, behaviour and words to scrutiny and criticism with a view to pick out drawbacks in His composition.

The Yogacharya then held him (Matilal Babu) by the hand and asked him, "How are you getting on ? Won't you write this year the book on "*Maharasa*" (the great circular dance with *Sri Krishna* and *Sri Radha* in the centre and the cowherds and cowherdesses singing and dancing all around) ?" This pronouncement had scarcely been made, when the Yogacharya became absorbed in *samadhi*. Mati Babu too was subjected to the same state divine under the inspiring and elevating influence of the holy touch of the *Divine Man*. Four hours passed away till they regained their normal state of mind. At departure Sj. Dharmadasa's father made a deep obeisance to and prayed Him in a deeply devout spirit and with fervour to be gracious to himself too. The miraculous event urged Mati Babu to feel blessed in having a son like Sj. Dharmadas who became instrumental in bringing about his union with the Yogacharya. He fervently

encouraged and enjoined his son to pay his usual visits and respects to Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva in defiance of all obstacles and the unanimous condemnation of all men. It was he who proclaimed in the holy place of Nabadwip, in unambiguous and unqualified terms, that the Yogacharya was *not* an *ordinary* man. Hence a message that Nabadwip was blessed with the arrival of a "*Nava Avatara*" (a new Incarnation of the Supreme), flew from mouth to mouth ; and it was not long ere it reached the several quarters of the locality. So, visitors in abundance began henceforward to pour into the holy abode. And if anybody made any enquiry about Him, the devotees were given to assert, "Lord *Gouranga* has again appeared".

Time wore on in this way. Verily, the path of righteousness and piety is strewn with the thorns of trials, and infested by the demons of obstacles and dangers. These seek to involve an aspirant or devotee in their pursuits and inroads. But the supreme mercy of the *Guru* serves him for an unceasing bulwark and *enables him to fortify himself against their attacks*. In fact, they threatened Deven Babu with overwhelming onslaughts and exposed him to the vehemence of some narrow-minded, bigoted members of the society. They addressed a letter to his father-in-law, Sj. Raghunath Bandyopadhyay, a very influential, old man of the locality and distinguished Muctearc of the then Krishnagar, evidently with threats to excommunicate Dr. Deven Babu for what they construed as his idle, unauthorised and unwarranted devotion to and attachment for a Sadhu, to whom they in ignorance assigned an inferior social position to themselves and hence to Deven Babu. Naturally Raghunath Babu,

who belonged to a respectable, high-class Brahman family and who, owing to his distinguished status, was called and revered as *Karitta* (lord) by the people of the locality, was aflame with rage. So, on his arrival at Nabadwip he pursued his way in hot haste and hence at a great pace to the holy abode.

Now, the devotees inside were engaged in performing at the full extent of their lungs *sankirttana* (the singing of songs in praise of some Divinity or sacred songs) with undivided attention. So, Raghunath Babu shouted to arouse attention and gain admittance. It was, however, of little avail, inasmuch as it was drowned in the loud songs devoutly sung by the devotees. But it did not escape the ear of the All-knowing Yogacharya ; and so He recommended the door to be undone to give admittance to one whom He termed "His beloved, old man".

Indeed, as soon as the old man entered into the room, he was carried away by the irresistible, nay overpowering stream of the *sankirttana* which thence began to be performed with redoubled enthusiasm and ardour. Infact, he felt prevailed upon to join the happy, devout band and sing loudly by clapping the hands. Next commenced the amazing, ecstatic dance of the Yogacharya, who now extended His arms and held the old man in His embrace. Raghunath Babu became quite powerless to resist the claims of the holy touch. Verily, it proved so inspiring as to urge him to dance with the alacrity, vivacity, sprightliness and energy of a boy, although he was an old man of seventy five. Once in the midst of his dance he, under an uncontrollable urge, bounded too high ; and so his head was exposed to the danger of striking against

a beam of the roof. These operations obviously resulted from the clapping of the hands by Guru Jnanananda Deva. In fact, the holy association with Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva rolled away the darkness from his understanding ; nay it elevated Raghunath Babu from the lower plane of meanness, narrowness and bigotry to a higher region of fervour ; and by reaching it he evidently realised the greatness of our revered Guru Deva. This is why he now began to pronounce pointing to Thakur, "There is my *Gour-Gopal.*" These words now formed the burden of the song sung by the devotees.

"Of all religions the best is
 The practice of *the Name* with purity of conduct.
 Of all rites the best is
 To purge one's heart of filth and evil tendencies by
association with those who have disciplined themselves.
 Of all devotional practices the best is
 The constant application of the heart to *the Name*.
 Of all sacred texts the most sacred is
 That by which one hears the praise of God and
 utters it to others.
 Of all holy places the holiest is
 Where one feels the stir of *the Name* in one's heart."

While these scenes were passing in the room, Dr. Deven Babu marvelled to mark the unexpected change achieved in the old man's composition under the inspiring, elevating and illuminating influence of the association with the Yogacharya. Indeed, his bosom swelled with exultation not unmixed with respectful admiration. The *sankirtana* was then brought to a termination and the holy *prosada* of our revered *Guru Deva* was distributed among the assembled

devotees. And it was after 2 A.M., that the *bhaktas* retreated to meet the demands of nature.

It behoves us to note here that on the eve of his departure Raghunath Babu extended, in an attitude of deep humility and profound reverence, to Guru Jnanananda Deva a cordial invitation to grace his house the following day with His holy presence and the dishes, to be dressed for His entertainment, with kind acceptance.

However, the presence of Guru Jnanananda Deva in his house was followed by the assemblage of a vast confluence of visitors. This became a source of annoyance to his nephew, Sj. Kalidas Bandyopadhyay. This young man, just as he attained the sight of the exquisitely beautiful form of the Yogacharya and also of the elegance and majesty of His shape, developed a supreme attitude of friendliness towards Him. And so he felt strongly inclined to hold communion with Him. But his inclination was intercepted by the vast gathering. However, as soon as an opportunity offered itself to him he implored a visit to his house. Accordingly the Yogacharya stepped forth to the place; here a bumper feast was arranged. Indeed, delicacies and fruits of various sorts were served in abundance. But our revered *Guru Deva* distributed them lavishly among the visitors. Mention should be made here also of the fact that Kalidas Babu was an accredited leader of the young men of all parties and as such exercised a vast influence over them. They held him in high regard not unmixed with awe. So, the initiation of this man of considerable importance was followed by far-reaching consequences, inasmuch as a great many youths felt prevailed upon to come into touch with the Yogacharya.

And Sj. Chandra Bhushan Bandyopadhyay, a near relative of his, had himself initiated inspite of his father's repugnance to Guru Jnanananda Deva.

"Teach me to live by faith,
Conform my will to Thine,
Let me victorious be in death.
And then in glory shine."

Now, not long after the Yogacharya had entered upon His glorious Nabadwip career, there dawned the holy *Vasanti-Astami* day, which, being the birth-day of the Yogacharya, attracted a vast confluence of devotees from the locality and outside to the holy *abode*. They assembled there to participate in both the Jnanananda-anniversary and the *Annapurna-pujah* celebrations. On the occasion of the *pujah*, that was performed by a devotee, a great many of Brahmanas and Vaisnavas were invited and entertained with the holy *prasada*. *Sankirtana* went on in full swing. An intimate friend of devotee Dharmadas, Sj. Srinath Goswami (later known as Srimat Swami Keshavananda Abadhuta), who, having studied the Vedanta in Benares, attained the title of *Chudamani* (lit. a crest-jewel), held on the road to Sj. Dharmadasa's place. He was in the way attracted to the holy *abode* by the enchanting note of the *samkirttana* and took his stand beside a window and called on Sj. Roy who was visible inside the room. But the keen eye of the Yogacharya distinguished him, when He heard his voice. And although Sj. Srinath had not picked acquaintance with Him, still He addressed him, in a quite familiar tone, by the aforesaid title and extended to him a cordial welcome. In response to the welcome and the beckoning summons he approached

Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva ; He then asked him in a whisper, "Is *Hring* your *Vija-mantra* ?" : Astounded at the intimation, Srinath Babu communicated to Sj. Dharmadas his sense of surprise and admiration. And that very day he attached himself to the hallowed feet of Thakur as His staunch adherent and expressed to Sj. Roy his strong desire for resorting to the life of *vairagya* under His guidance. However, it now goes without saying that Sj. Goswami, realizing the greatness of the Yogacharya, surrendered himself to His mercy and espoused the blessed life. Thus did he stifle all debasing and enfeebling thoughts which are the evil products of attachment for the world, shyness, caste-conceit and fear of the loss of prestige. Then did Thakur invite the devout Goswami evidently with every mark of cordiality and eagerness to partake of the holy *prasada* of Goddess *Annapurna*. At this the *bhakta* said in a way quite befitting the noble spirit of devotion the nurture of which indubitably lay fostered in his heart, "It is by the grace of the Divine Mother, *Annapurna*, that I have reached You ! Now do I crave for Your *prasada*." However, Thakur, whose innate courtesy characterised His dealings even with His adherents, said, "Had I been advised of your presence here earlier, I would have had the *pujah* performed by you. All right ! The coming year it will be done by you." Scarcely had this interesting dialogue drawn to a close, when Srijut Kalidas Bandyopadhyay made his appearance there and participated in the function. This event was followed by the continuation of the *kirttana* with redoubled ardour. In no time was he subjected to an exalted state of devotional feeling and hence could not resist the impulse

to dance in trance. The sight proved inspiring to all so much so that they too were prompted by an inner urge, as it were, to dance. Then commenced the ecstatic dance of our revered *Guru Deva* who, in this state, embraced many of the assembled devotees and caused Sj. Srinath to dance like a boy by holding his hands. The *kirttana* continued with unabated zeal and knew no termination till the dawn began to peep.

"O blessed Name ! Thy deepest meaning never
To erring mortals can revealed be ;
Yet art Thou all in all and we will ever
Walk with unwavering confidence in Thee."

However, the message of Sj. Srinath's surrender to the mercy of Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was most probably conveyed to his elder brother, Sj. Nityagopal Goswami. This is why perhaps he once accompanied his younger brother to the holy *abode* where Sj. Srinath prostrated himself at the revered, holy feet of the Yogacharya. Nrityagopal Babu, however, as his attitude clearly indicated, felt, as a high-class Brahmana, precluded from making a low obeisance to our revered *Guru Deva*. At that time Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva's mind was abstracted from the worldly environment ; indeed, He then remained absorbed in *samadhi* effected by the songs on God the assembled devotees were performing. All on a sudden a sound resembling the humming of bees surprised the assembly. They were at a loss to account for it ; but for a cultured man of the type of Nrityagopal Goswamiji it was not difficult to solve the puzzle. He ascribed it to a religious exercise (of suspending the breath by closing the mouth and both the nostrils) technically characterised as



SRI SRI NITYAGOPAL

(Known also as the Yogacharya Sri Srimat Abadhuta Jnanananda Deva)

"*Bhramari Kumbhaka*", with which the Yogacharya was then occupied. This wonderful event conveyed to the Goswami a definite idea of our revered Guru Deva's supremacy and greatness. Then he held himself obliged to yield to an irresistible, noble impulse of bowing profoundly to the "*Great Man*". This wonderful incident was followed by his initiation into the creed of the Yogacharya as a devoted disciple of our revered Guru Deva.

"Lord, for ever at thy side
May my place, my portion be ;
Strip me of the robe of pride,
Clothe me with humility."

Then some urgent piece of business necessitated the Yogacharya's journey to Calcutta. So the Station Master, Sj. Kalidas Sarker, secured for Him an accommodation in the first-class compartment and instructed the previously-mentioned Serang, Sj. Mati, to try all the resources in his power to minister to His needs and comforts. Accordingly, the Serang assumed a seat beside Him. And Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva held such discourses on religious subjects as inspired in him a belief that our revered Guru Deva belonged to his faith.

However, the same compartment accommodated a respectable gentleman, an M. A. student, named Sj. Kalipada Roy, son of Sj. Ananda Mohan Roy, a Zemindar of Nadabwip, whose eminent position in the locality enabled him for a time to discharge the functions of the Vice-chairman of the then Nadabwip Municipality. Now, the young man had a deep sense of prestige; he derived it from the consciousness of his lofty standing at

Nabadwip and dignified position of an M.A. student in those days ; it rendered the presence of the Yogacharya in the same compartment with him extremely annoying, nay unbearable : to him. Evidently the greatness of our revered *Guru Deva* was inconceivable to his deluded understanding and so he in ignorance assigned to Him an inferior rank to himself. But the supreme grace of Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva subsequently rolled away the darkness from his understanding.

Now, there were some hair-splitting discourses in the part of a book of philosophy Sj. Kalipada then employed himself in reading. He racked his brain over them ; still they defied his intellectual powers which failed to grasp the ideas contained in them. It was at such a time that the Yogacharya, who evidently had paid no heed at all to Sj. Kalipada's activity, referred, in the course of His tackling some problems of philosophy, to the particular book to the study of which the youngman remained devoted and to the contents of the particular page which proved quite puzzling to the student. He made the very quotations and elucidated them in a remarkably impressive way ; this enabled Kalipada Babu to grasp the meaning. Indeed, the event struck the young scholar dumb. Meanwhile the steamer reached the Kalna station. And the Yogacharya felt inclined to go down to buy green cocoanuts for a light refreshment for the night. But Sj. Kalipada Roy, who had been astounded at the greatness of Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, felt prevailed upon to purchase those articles himself for His use and await His descent. Then the approach of our revered *Guru Deva* to where he had taken his stand was immediately followed by his

presentation of the cocoanuts to Him. The Yogacharya had to yield to his solicitations ; and so He graced His presents by his kind acceptance. The spirit of deep humility mingled with devotion, which the holy association with Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva engendered in him, urged him even to take the holy *prosada*, inspite of the objection of the "*Great Man*."

The wonderful incident effected a remarkable change in the composition of Kalipada Babu. He now became a devout follower of Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. Indeed, he even desisted from his strong desire for going forth to the mess in Calcutta in order to devote himself whole-heartedly to his studies ; nay he accompanied the Guru during His visits to several quarters of the city and the suburbs, as will be evident from the following facts.

Sj. Kalipada Roy alighted at Abhiritolla (Calcutta) steamer station along with Thakur and accompanied Him to the residence of Bepin Babu at Hogalkunrhay. Evidently his absorbing attachment for Thakur and His holy company now seriously affected his devotion to studies, nay inclined him to constant attendance on Him. So, he dropped the idea of going forth to the mess and followed His steps wherever He bent them. Thakur took His leave of Bepin Babu and paid at the house of Sj. Girischandra Ghosh at Baghbazar His visit to a devout lady represented to us as '*Nadidi*' (third (elder) sister). He was reverently entertained by her. He remained there till the close of the day, when He started in a car for Sarsuna (off Behala). Here He was cordially welcomed by Sj. Sasibhusan Sarkar. Now, Sasi Babu had an aunt in a pious lady who, because of her deep devotion to the practice of *Yoga*, obtained the

title of 'Mother *Yogini*' (female *Yogi*). Both of them had attached themselves to the discipleship of Thakur. So, He found here a suitable accommodation. It should, however, be noted in this connection that 'mother *Yogini*' had installed, in a separate house, an Image of *Sri Radha* under the Name of *Rajabala* (the King's Daughter). The house was called *Rajabalar barki* (*Rajabala's* house). The solitude that reigned there invited Thakur to take up His lodging in that abode along with His follower. It also afforded Him the opportunity to write books; so He would remain mostly occupied with the work. But scarcely had He passed a short time there, when many gentlemen of the locality had an inkling into His incomprehensible greatness in more ways than one and hence felt attracted to Him. Some of them even went so far as to humbly submit to His guidance and initiation and choose and welcome Him as their most Venerable *Guru Deva*. There was among them a young man who reached a high stage of spiritual advancement; and when a *kirttana* would be performed, he would have a sight of his *Ishta Devata* manifested in the body of Thakur. This would subject him to an ebullition of emotions. And he would be helplessly driven to ascend and sit on the lap of Thakur in a state of inspiration.

Now, among the youthful visitors to the solitary, holy abode of *Rajabala*, there would appear one of great wealth and high position. Perhaps he had questionable faith in matters supra-sensual and spiritual. This is why he would scoff at the above-mentioned young man and hold up to ridicule his blessed state of ecstasy. But in this case too, as in many other ones, the grace of Thakur worked a miracle.

Indeed, he, who had jeered at a devotee, became a devotee himself by being entangled in the filial love of Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. Infact, he took shelter at His hallowed feet. It was, however, a pity that his acceptance of Thakur as his Spiritual Master and Guide incurred the displeasure of all the members of his family except his accomplished and devoted wife. They would even obstruct his intense longing for visiting Guru Jnanananda Deva. But the blazing fire of the supreme mercy of Thakur burnt to ashes all the obstacles in the *bhakta's* path of union with the Lord. The devotee's sharp intelligence devised a wonderful means of achieving his noble purpose quite undetected. He would have a long piece of cloth fastened very tightly to the window and come down the top floor along the same with the help of his wife. Then would he mount his horse and speedily reach his desired destination, Thakur's *Ashram* at 29, Manoharpakur Road, (now known as Mahanirvan Math, Rasbehary Avenue) at Kalighat in Calcutta. There he would pass a long time in the enjoyment of the holy company of the *Guru* and go back to Sarsuna, even while the remnants of the night still lingered on the surface of the Earth. Thus would he throw dust in the eyes of the inmates of his house and climb the top floor along the same passage and lay himself down to sleep in his room. Mention should be made in this connection also of the fact that *bhaktas* from Calcutta would occasionally pay their visits to the aforesaid *Ashram* and remain many hours fully occupied with the enjoyment of the bliss of *kirttans*. They would also magnificently perform ceremonies on festive occasions.

However, a critical study of Thakur's life, that is

closely associated with deep regard, invariably leads a reader to the conclusion that it challenges, as already indicated, the discernment of even a man far above mediocrity in intellectual vigour, concentration of the mind and ingenuity. This is well-attested also by the accounts given below :

While staying at Sarsuna Thakur had to pay one day a visit to Calcutta. And it was not possible for Him to reach the way back to the place of residence before 2 A.M., or so. Scarcely had a point in the passage been reached, when He attracted the notice of a very large number of ghosts, to whom He evidently appeared to be their Lord. Most probably thrilled with raptures, they could not resist the impulse to follow His steps by making a horrible noise in various ways. And they did not desist from that act till He drew near to Dutta Bazar, when they entered into an adjoining, deserted house. But He moved on towards His desired destination.

Again, when the siter-in-law of devotee Hari Ghose of Sarsuna was removed to the crematorium at Jadabpur ghat in a moribund condition that she might breathe her last in a state of purification by association with the supremely holy *Ganga*, the Merciful Thakur was graciously pleased to do the rather unusual act of presenting Himself to the spot; nay on the eve of her sinking into eternal sleep, He revealed Himself to her as her *Ishta Devata* and thus liberated her from the ties of worldly attachment. Indeed, by His supreme, causeless mercy, she was fortunate enough to reach the stage of spiritual advancement, which even a religious enthusiast cannot easily attain to by observing most devoutly practices with

close undivided attention. Verily, such is the miraculous efficacy of bearing loving devotion towards the Lord. This is why Lord Srikrishna has said, "On Me fix thy mind ; be devoted to Me ; sacrifice to Me ; prostrate thyself before Me ; harmonised thus in the self, thou shalt come unto Me, having Me as thy supreme goal." (34)

Gita, Ninth Discourse.

Now, during His stay at Sarsuna Thakur would at times sanctify the house of Sj. Sasi Ghose at Haltu off Ballygunge station with His holy presence and accord the *bhakta* the blessed privilege of close association with Him. Besides, the spot commended itself to Him, most probably because it was removed from the dust and din of the city of Calcutta. And He even proposed to buy plots of land behind the aforesaid house for founding a Math thereon. But evidently He had to drop the idea, when it was possible for Him to have a house and the attached land at the previously-mentioned Manoharpukur Road (at present, 113, Rasbehary Avenue) at Kalighat purchased at an auction on the 5th *Asharha* (June), B. S. 1301. And it was destined to develop into the distinguished institution known as Mahanirvan Math where His holy body now lies buried. However, in the course of His conversations with His disciples Thakur said to them, "Mahanirvan Math was an institution founded in very ancient times in Kasi (Benares) by the righteous men belonging to the section (or division) of the *Abadhuta sampradaya* known as *Kevalananda sakha*. In process of time it (the institution) died out. So, Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva established it again at Kalighat in Calcutta (about fifty three years back) in B. S.

1301 as the supremely holy meeting ground (place of junction) of all the Religions, when He revived the Doctrine and Creed of the *Abadhuta sampradaya* propounded and professed (or religious duties incumbent on (an aspirant to the stage of) a *Paramahamsa* inculcated) by Sri Sri Hrishava Deva, the Eighth Incarnation of the Supreme as declared by *Srimadbhagawatam*." We feel inclined to refer here to the fact that Thakur exhorted the devotees to celebrate privately His birth-anniversary on the holy *Vasanti-Ashtami tithi*. He, however, imposed no such restriction on the celebration of the *Gurupurnima tithi*. They might, He said, solemnise this latter festivity publicly even with pomp and show, if they chose. But He subsequently threw out the hint that even the birthday festival might be observed openly with eclat and zeal after the termination of His earthly career. However, Thakur remained for a time at Sarsuna.

Now, extreme concern for his son laid hold on Sj. Ananda Mohan Roy of Nabadwip, when the report of Sj. Kalipada's long absence from the mess reached him. He had, however, an information of his adherence to Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva.

Meanwhile the Yogacharya went back to Nabadwip along with His adherents in the list of whom Kalipada Babu was included. Highly offended and incensed at his son's conduct, Sj. Ananda Mohan Roy presented himself to the holy *abode*. Then did he seek an interview with Sri Srimat Abadhuta Jnanananda Deva with the express desire of gauging Him and withdrawing his son's allegiance from our revered *Guru Deva*. Indeed, his son now became too attached to Him to think of his studies and household

duties ; nay he began to pass the major portion of the day in the holy presence of Thakur and absent himself from home. Now, Sj. Ananda Roy was too conscious of his lofty position. So he requested the devotees to keep his visit to the Yogacharya in perfect secrecy 'lest he should be lowered in the estimation of the public. However, Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva intimated through Dr. Deven Babu His desire to realize his wish after a week. The intimation gave a rude shock to his sense of prestige. Still, circumstances compelled him to go again to the same place on the day fixed and seek an interview with Thakur. On then his being ushered into His presence, Guru Jnanananda Deva wanted that their parley should be without witness ; and so He recommended the disciples assembled there to withdraw and the door of the room to be chained. However, scarcely had half an hour passed, when a terrific cry smote upon their ears. And the Yogacharya was heard to laugh by clapping His hands, and remark, "Ah ! what a deplorable condition the Vice-chairman has been reduced to !"

The devotees availed themselves of the opportunity to enter the room. Quite an unexpected, nay amazing face of things met their eyes. Tears accompanied with loud cries rolled down Sj. Ananda Mohan's eyes. And he was heard to proclaim Sri Srimat Abadhuta Jnanananda Deva as *Narayana* (the Supreme Lord *Vishnu*). He regretted, nay condemned with remorse, his departure from the right path of devotions and declared his pride of honour and position humbled. He also intimated feelingly that, through the grace of the Yogacharya, he had been blessed with the sight of the illuminating, intelligent form of Mother-

(Goddess) *Kali*. He also appealed fervently to the devotees to reckon him as a brother. These pronouncements were attended with a deep obeisance to our revered *Guru Deva* on the eve of his departure.

It goes without saying that the grace of Thakur achieved a miraculous change in Sj. Ananda Roy's religious principle. Evidently he entered upon a grand, new career, nay was elevated to a far loftier position in the sphere of righteousness. His mind was now in a high glow of loving devotion. He felt prevailed upon to have without delay, an Image of the Divine Mother, *Dakshina Kali*, built and worshipped by a due observance of the rites requisite. On this festive occasion he invited Thakur cordially to condescend to grace his house with His holy presence. The devotees, too, were earnestly requested to follow Him. He received their presence with every mark of civility coupled with reverence. Thus did he vindicate the honour of the Lord and His attendants. Their presence in the house created there an atmosphere intense with religious fervour. However, they were next taken to the garden-house of Pirtala, where the devotee named Srimat Krishnananda Swami began to sing a *kirttana*. This dissolved Thakur into ecstasies. And He began to dance, drunk, as it were, with ecstatic love. Sj. Ananda Roy was seated a few paces off. He was prompted by an inner urge to reach Thakur by a single jump. And, inebriated with the love of the Lord, he threw his arms round His holy body and held, in a rapturous mood, the Supreme Giver of the bliss of divine inebriation in a fast embrace. Then began the ecstatic dance of Sj. Kalipada followed by that of his father. Ah ! it was a scence to

marvel at, indeed ! Both the father and the son were united in a community of spiritual fervour. Many of the other bhaktas too were inspired with emotions and performed dances. The demonstrations continued with unabated zeal till the last watch of the night. Then was Thakur entertained with a grand feast, the termination of which was followed by His return to the *Ashram*. It should, however, be mentioned in this connection that Sj. Kalipada Roy was initiated along with his wife on this occasion.

Henceforward Sj. Ananda Roy became remarkable for his civility to the *bhaktas*. He laid, as it were, his axe at the root of his arrogance of wealth and position and became frank in his dealings with them. Sj. Kalipada Roy, a regular visitor to the *Ashram*, would seem to sit there loose to the interests of the world. He would sing *kirttana*, and sometimes laugh, sometimes dance and sometimes weep and sometimes even cry aloud like a divine monkey. Once Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva touched his chin in an intense spiritual mood and said with warmth of affection, "Hello ! My beloved *Murari* !"

Needless it is to mention that Sj. Kailpada Roy developed supreme attachment for the revered Guru Jnanananda Deva. This subjected him to a strong desire for getting rid of the object that he considered as the greatest cause of his bondage to the worldly life. This was nothing but his extreme love for his wife, who too was a disciple of the Yogacharya. The best way, he thought, to seek release from it was to secure eternal separation from her. That was impossible of accomplishment without her death.

Accordingly, he would often pray to Sri Sri Nityagopal

Deva for the achievement of his object which He was given to sternly object to. Once, however, when He was lost in ecstasy, Kalipada Babu clasped His hallowed feet and prayed fervently for the fulfilment of his desire. In that state Sri Srimat Abadhuta Deva thrice declared that his end should be realized. And scarcely had three days elapsed after the pronouncement, when the devotee's wife suddenly fell a victim to Cholera to which she succumbed. The message was conveyed to the revered *Guru Deva* who burst into a passion of sorrow and said in a state of super-consciousness, "Come, come, come soon!"

Kalipada Babu, however, was in high glee and approached the Yogacharya with the solicitation that he might not again be entangled in the fetters of marriage. This was met with the reply that he had not approached Him with that prayer previously. He (the Yogacharya) further asserted that he should have again to submit to the yoke of marriage with a wife who would be instrumental in effecting his bondage in the fetters of unavoidable attachment. But, Thakur declared, the wife, whose death he had so eagerly craved for, would have thrown no obstacle in the way of his achieving the supreme end.

Verily, a few days after the occurrence of this touching incident, another evil laid hold on their family : a step-brother of Kalipada Babu fell in the grip of a fell disease and, as a result, lay in a precarious condition. This urgently necessitated the prompt attendance of a physician. And so Kalipada Babu had to go out after mid-night to call on a doctor in the midst of an inclement weather when there raged a storm with rain. He left the house alone with a fervent appeal to the grace of Thakur, which

found vent in the utterance, "Glory to the *Guru*." The appeal evidently reached the compassionate heart of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva and awakened the immediate echo of His grace and He readily revealed Himself to the distressed *bhakta* in his way to the doctor's. This mysterious revelation of His grace stirred thrills in Sj. Kalipada's nerves and woke a deep sense of indescribable gratitude in his remarkably responsive heart. Indeed, he felt, as it were, a storm of emotions sweeping through his tender veins and burst into tears, saying, "All Hail ! Gopal, Thou hast come !" At these words Thakur said, "Let Me serve you for a companion ; how can you go alone ?" Sj. Kalipada reached the desired destination. Still Thakur bore him company (nay He accorded him the favour till the devotee went back to his home). The doctor was not available. And sorely disappointed, the *bhakta* retraced his steps to his residence. But here he saw a heart-rending scene of overwhelming grief, inasmuch as the patient had expired.

In fact, we have already touched upon some points about Ananda Babu's visit to the Yogacharya and also about the wonderful change that the elevating association with our revered *Guru Deva* effected in his conduct and character. He, however, was blessed with the privilege of realizing, in a more remarkable degree, His supremacy and greatness thus :

On the loss of a son in the full bloom of boyhood, Ananda Babu's wife was overwhelmed with griefs which admitted of no consolation. She was also subject to an impatient and uncontrollable yearning after seeing him once. Under her pressure Sj. Ananda Roy approached the Yogacharya with solicitations for the fulfilment of her

desire. Sri Srimat Abadhuta Guru Jnanananda Deva, however, reluctantly yielded to his earnest entreaties and assured them of the achievement of their objet. Thenceforward both the wife and the husband passed two weeks or so, expecting every day the happy re-union.

But there dawned, after the expiration of this period, a day on which the matter slipped from their memory. However, the evening closed upon them. Then appeared the time for Ananda Babu's supper. He took his meal and was then seated in a posture of repose in his parlour, when the son, who had died, made his appearance before him and asked him if he had had his betels. The reply being negative, the boy secured the articles from his mother and offered them to his father.

It is amazing, indeed, that subject to the deluding and enchanting power of illusion, both Ananda Babu and his wife were deprived of the memory of the great loss. So, the mysterious appearance of the son did not at all strike them. This is why the father betrayed no sign of amazement after the betels had been handed over to him, but sought to lull the son to sleep. However, when on waking he found that the son was missing from his side, he desired to ascertain his whereabouts and asked his wife to enlighten him on the matter. The wife too, a victim to delusion and illusion, informed him of what had occurred before the boy sought to supply his need. This altercation between the deluded couple arrested the attention of Ananda Babu's mother ; through the intensity of grief she wept bitterly and told them in amazement that they had lost him for ever. It was this information that rolled away the darkness of delusion from their under-

standing and enabled them (the couple) to realize the situation. Ananda Babu marvelled to think on the mysterious matter, visited the holy *abode* along with his wife and conveyed the wonderful message to the devotees.

“Not by your words alone,
But by your action show
How much from Him you have received,
How much to Him you owe.”

Thus, as days rolled on, many individuals of an intensely spiritual bent of mind felt attracted to Thakur. Indeed, they were prompted by an inner urge of devotion to take shelter at the hallowed, lotus feet of One who commanded their reverential allegiance. However, one evening Thakur happened to hold talks on Vidyanagar and dealt, in passing and by the way, with the reverend Gangadas Bhattacharya and Basudeb Sarbabhauma. In the course of this discourse He fell into a deep trance and the *bhaktas* then felt prevailed upon to sing holy songs. Then led, as it were, by the impetuous zeal of His ecstatic moods, Thakur conferred on them whatever boons they prayed for. The *sankirtana* continued with unabated zeal throughout the whole night ; and when it ceased evidently at dawn, He said to the *bhaktas*, “Go home, take rest and come back to Me. I must go forth to Vidyanagar positively to-day.” Then did they carry out His order and feel irresistively drawn to meet Him betimes. Thus did the Yogacharya once set forth on a journey towards Vidyanagar in the company of the devotees. Scarcely had He reached the skirts of Nadabwip, when He passed into ecstasy at the sight of a grog-shop with the pronouncement, “Here would My Nitai ask for wine in the attitude of *Bilai*.” This utterance was attended with His

absorption in a state of superconsciousness which evidently developed in Him an attitude of His identity with *Balai* (*Sri Balarama*) ; and He said again and again, "Let Me have wine !" Now there prevailed an incessant flow of nectar from His mouth. So inspiring was its influence that whosoever touched it with the lips was quite lost in high emotions. Verily, Sri Sri Nityagopala Deva pursued in this condition the road to Vidyanganar till the holy place was reached. It was, during the days of *Sri Sri Gouranga Deva*, watered by the holy *Bhagirathi*, which has now dried up. Our revered *Guru Deva* descended into the waterless bed of the river and besmeared His holy body with the holy mud plucked thence. This was followed by His visit to the Images of *Nitai* and *Gour* at "Vidyanidhi path." Here was He absorbed in ecstasy and indistinctly expressed His desire for visiting a milkman's house.

The communication was followed by their visit to the house of a milkman named Sj. Brajanath Ghose, an old man of hundred, who was a tenant of Sj. Dharmadas Roy. The old man was intensely religious-minded ; so, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, although quite unknown to him, was welcomed by him with every mark of deep devotion, and a profound obeisance.

Now, matters took here a very interesting and amazing turn. Dr. Devendranath Mukhopadhyay had made up his mind to offer the Yogacharya privately two pieces of sweets which he had kept concealed. Our revered *Guru Deva*, although Deven Babu had not communicated that fact to Him, brought it to the notice of the other devotees. Then did He enjoin Dharmadas Babu to make an offering of the delicacies to the Image of Lord *Gouranga* he had in their

house. The order was promptly carried out and the *prosada* presented to the Abadhuta Deva who was the bent upon distributing the same among the devotees.

At this stage Sj. Kalidas Bandyopadhyaya insisted on having the *prosada* in whole and not in bits. Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, although He was possessed of two pieces of sweets, readily agreed to realize his wish. He, however, directed the bhaktas to perform *sankirttana*. Then did the *sankirttana* go on in full swing ; and in the midst thereof He invited the devotees to take the *prosada*. Each time a *bhakta* received a pair of sweets. In this way all the devotees, about seventeen in number, were sumptuously entertained with the *prosada* which originally consisted of two pieces of sweets only ! Next, on the termination of the *sankirttana* Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva graced with His acceptance the articles of food prepared in the house of the blessed milk-man for His entertainment. The old man too partook of the holy *prosada*. And scarcely had the world grown three days old after that event, when the devout, noble soul expired.

Indeed, the termination of the entertainment at Vidyanagar paved the way for the Yogacharya's journey towards Bhatsala, the village where there was the residence of devotee Dharmadas. Thakur was thrilled with joy, when He learnt that the resort to that path would effect the circumambulation of quarters surrounding Nadia (Nabadwip). Now, the fields were then adorned with crops, since this event occurred somewhere by the middle of February. To all appearance, Thakur was then subject to the impetuous zeal of His ecstatic moods. This evidently developed in Him tendencies, buoyancy and smartness

becoming a boy ; nay they seemed to surge in His heart. And so, He behaved just like one and sometimes expressed His desire for eating sugar-canies and sometimes pea-legumes. He did not stop here but set Himself to brisk pace and moved along the fields with bounds. In this state did He pluck pea-legumes and put them in the skirts of His cloth. But at the same time the Merciful Thakur showered, in exalted spiritual moods, blessings on the owners of those fields, so that the crops might not be harmed nor suffer in any way. While Thakur's mind appeared thus to career madly through the ocean of spiritual ecstasy, the *bhaktas* were astounded and amused to see even the plants behave like animate beings. They seemed to seek to break out into passionate appeals to and beseech Thakur importunately to be accorded the favour and privilege of serving and entertaining Him with their fruits. However, in this state Thakur reached Panchanantala at Bhatsala in the company of the devotees, when evening was about to close upon them. It should, however, be mentioned in this connection that, fringing the village, there is a charming bower of creepers which is adorned with a temple of *Shiva*. When Dharmadas Babu was a boy of six, he was given to visit the same and circumambulate the temple with deep devotion. The devotee had never conveyed this information to Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. However, the Yogacharya's arrival there was followed by His visit to the temple. He was now thrilled with emotions and performed dances which were attended with the pronouncement of "*Babom*", "*Babom*". He also uttered the name of "*Bhairab*" and referred to the spot as one where Dharmadas Babu would perform devotional

duties. On enquiry, the devotees were enlightened on Sj. Dharmadasa's observance of the previously-mentioned practice there. Indeed, they marvelled to hear now with rapt attention the inspired and inspiring outpourings of Thakur's heart.

However, the pea-legumes collected by Thakur were burnt and offered to *Panchanan*. And the *bhaktas* received the holy *prasada* from the holy hands of Thakur. By chance there stood hard by a peasant-boy. He also was fortunate enough to be allowed the blessed privilege of serving the Lord with His followers. So, he was prompted by an inner urge, as it were, to propose to supply them with molasses. Encouraged by a large gesture from Thakur, he brought them newly-prepared, excellent molasses. At this Thakur laid His holy hand on the crown of his head and blessed him, saying, with warmth of love, that he might fare happily in life. It goes without saying that Thakur partook, along with His disciples, of the molasses and the holy, burnt pea-legumes and then left that place.

Hence our revered *Guru Deva* proceeded to *bhakta* Dharmadasa's village-home which then stood deserted. Now, there was, in the neighbourhood, a Brahmana-widow who bore towards Dharmadas Babu motherly love. The devotee had communicated on a previous occasion to her a message as to the supremacy and greatness of the Abadhuta Deva. This had inspired in her the firm belief that He was an Incarnation of the Supreme. Deep meditation on these points led to her dreaming once a dream as regards our revered *Guru Deva*'s auspicious visit to her place and her worshipping Him with flowers. No sooner had the tidings as to her beloved Dharmadasa's arrival

at his home been received by her than she hastened to the same ; there she had an information about the Yogacharya's presence in the same. The communication excited high emotions in her and, with tears in her eyes, she humbly invited Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva to grace her home with His auspicious visit. He readily accepted the invitation—which encouraged the devout lady to make a profound obeisance to Him. She entertained Him sumptuously with delicious articles dressed in several modes. This was, however, preceded by a solemn performance of the *pujah* of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva to her heart's content. The termination of the feast was followed by the commencement of *sankirtanas* that knew no cessation till the night expired. On the day following the lady was blessed with the privilege of again entertaining the Yogacharya with a rich dinner. But when the Abadhuta Deva prepared to resume His return journey to Nabadwip, she was afflicted with a pang of separation which our revered *Guru Deva* sought to allay with words of consolation. Indeed, 'there are so many who approach the Lord through service : they get their minds illumined thereby.'

Scarcely had Guru Jnanananda Deva set His foot on Nabadwipa, when His ears were attracted by a *kirttana* on the Name of *Hari* ; that, He was informed, was being intoned in the house of a devout shoe-maker named Bhuban. He was a very noble soul subsisting purely on vegetable diet and given to visit every day the several quarters of the holy place. Every evening saw him occupied, in the company of his wife, son, daughter and son-in-law, with the performance of *kirttana*. The Yogacharya presented

Himself to the house of the devotee and held him fast in a sweet embrace with the pronouncement, "Even a shoe-maker becomes purified by the utterance of the Name of *Hari*." The shoe-maker too developed supreme attachment for our revered *Guru Deva* and could not resist his desire to accompany Him to the *Ashram*.

Another incident happened during the excursions ; and not being of inferior significance and importance to the foregoing ones, it claims a tribute of consideration. In the course of His visits to the suburbs of Nabadwip including Vasudevapur, the road to Katwa arrested His attention, and with the pronouncement, "This path leads to Katwa", He became absorbed in *samadhi*. And the devotees had to perform a *kirttana* on the Name of '*Hari*' for one hour till He came to Himself.

"Oh, would I had a thousand tongues,
To sound Thy praise o'er land and sea ;
Oh, rich and sweet should be my songs
Of all my God has done for me !"

Now, during the Abadhuta Deva's career at Nabadwip, Ganesh Babu, a younger brother of Sj. Kalidas Bandyopadhyaya, made arrangements for a pleasure feast ; it was to be held in a secluded, clear spot, girt round with a dense forest, in the south of '*Paka-tola*' and west of Buicharapara ; this spot was destined for the plantation of betel-plants by the *Baruis* (betel-cultivators or sellers or thatchers). However, in this drama of the forest-picnic, our revered *Guru Deva* chose to act the part of dividing kitchen vegetables into small pieces so as to make them fit for cooking. But His desire was intercepted by the commencement of a stirring *kirttana* by Kalidas Babu.

Indeed, overwhelmed with an accession of high emotions, He evidently could not resist the claims of a great, ecstatic dance. It proved extremely inspiring to all and infected some. So far-reaching an influence was exercised by the thrilling music that a vast confluence of the *Baruis*, who were busy with their work in the neighbourhood, were prevailed upon to participate in the function. Even the wild inhabitants of the forest, the jackals, kept aside their usual fear of man, nay were moved by an inner urge, as it were, to take part therein. Not blessed with the power of speech and music, which is the monopoly of human beings, they set forth yells evidently with a joyful exultation. And the Yogacharya, who had not yet come to Himself, seemed to recognize their superior claims to consideration and hence entertained them with sweets. This was a trait in His character which bore a glowing testimony to His causeless mercy to the poor creatures.

However, the preparations for the feast were grand, no doubt ; but the articles of food, that were secured, were sufficient for the entertainment of twelve devotees only, that had evidently assembled there. The devotees had never taken thought of so vast a gathering consisting of two hundred and fifty heads and as such had not been prepared for feasting them. But to their considerable surprise, so great a number of guests were sumptuously fed with so slender a resource !

Verily, during Thakur's career at Nabadwip the *bhaktas* would devote themselves almost every night to the performance of the recital before Him of '*Geeta*', '*Chaitanya Bhagawata*', '*Bhaktamala*' and other religious books including '*Of the Imitation of Christ*'. The termination

of the recital would usually be followed by the performance of *kirtanas*. On some occasions, however, Thakur would impart to the *bhaktas* religious instructions and then exhort them to sing one or two songs on the essential unity of different standpoints. Then would they take their leave. In this way they would pass their days at Nabadwip happily in the holy company of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva.

However, during His career at Nabadwip our revered *Guru Deva* was given to visit the several quarters of the holy place.

On one occasion He set forth on a journey towards the burial of Chand Kazi with the express desire, as He declared afterwards, for hearing the Mussalmans of Belpukur utter the Name of "*Hari*". And it was not long ere His desire was fulfilled. Indeed, scarcely had He reached a certain point in the journey, when He was subject to an overpowering accession of divine emotions. And these found vent through the shouts of "*Hoom*", dances with violent gesticulations and the pronouncement, "The Kazi is breaking the *khole*!" Then, on He rushed towards the burial and sang in a very loud voice the Name of "*Hari*". The inspiring movements of the Yogacharya prevailed upon a number of Mussalmans of Belpukur to join Him in the singing. Then there came a highly educated and respectable Mahomedan gentleman, who was the honorary Magistrate of Krishnagar. He was a devout soul and drew his descent from Chand Kazi. He made a profound obeisance to the Yogacharya and humbly offered to present some green cocoanuts. The Yogacharya readily accepted the offer with the remark that He was most intimately connected with the Kazi and would call him *mama*.

(maternal uncle). The remark was attended with His absorption in *samadhi*. And the Mussalmans too uttered '*Hari*', '*Hari*' in order to restore Him to His normal state of mind. These men developed a great leaning for the Yogacharya and declared Him as their *Peer* (a Mahomedan Saint or Prophet).

However, once there arose a dispute among the devout Vaishnavas as regards the site of the ancient Nabadwip (known as Mayapur) where stood the temple of Lord *Gouranga* established by the blessed Vishnupriya. Some confused it (Mayapur) with Miyapur. But an asseveration of the Yogacharya that the real site in question lay under the surface of the *Ganga* convinced some of the devotees of *Sri Sri Chaitanya Deva*. Through the grace of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, these noble souls were subsequently blessed with a view of the top of a temple.

It was at such a time that our revered *Guru Deva* felt inclined to a visit to Mayapur. Accordingly He set out in the company of a few devotees. Thus He crossed over Mayapur and stepped forth a little further, when He roared out in a terrible voice, "There bursts the *khole* (a double-faced, longish drum shaped like a barley-corn and played with both the hands) ; there bursts the *khole* !" In fact, now He appeared, in a trance, to be mentally transported to a higher, spiritual plane of existence. Again did He thunder out, "Uncle Kazi, I shall beat thee !" His movements now became impetuous and defied all efforts at resistance. Indeed, He seemed to move about agreeably to a mysterious, musical measure which remained inaudible to human ear. This behaviour of the Yogacharya conveyed to the accompanying devotees an idea that,

absorbed in trance, He had passed into a state of being in which He was hearing the divine songs sung by a band of *Kirttaniyas* (the performers of *sankirttana*) and hence was dissolved into ecstasies. Then He proceeded in that state to the holy burial of Chand Kazi. Here prevailed quite an unexpected and unpremeditated state of things. Thakur moved round the burial place, dancing in a highly exalted mood of spiritual fervour. Now, close beside the tomb there is a *Kathamallika* tree which then stood deprived of its wealth of leaves and flowers. Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, still in an indrawn mood, took His stand beneath it and was in no time absorbed in *samadhi*. There appeared in His supremely holy body the well-known eight signs of the manifestation of the pure feelings or emotions of loving devotion, such as tears, horripillation, tremor and so on and so forth. These served to intensify its lustre. A torrent of tears flowed down His eyes and flooded the region of His breast. They (His eyes) grew quite motionless and His gaze remained fixed. His body became icy-cold as in a state of collapse. Just at that time the devotees became astounded beyond measure to see that from the aforesaid *Kathamallika* tree flowers fell incessantly down on and covered the lotus feet of Thakur. They interpreted it to be an offering of flowers placed at the hallowed feet by the noble, righteous Kazi. Now, a few bands of *Kirttaniyas* (performers of *sankirttanas*) happened to pass by that way. They felt attracted to the holy spot and then joined the *sankirttana*. All were beside themselves with joy under the inspiring influence of the supremely holy association and atmosphere. In fact, *sankirttanas* and dances continued in full swing around the holy burial of

Chand Kazi, which now presented an enchanting look. What a large number of *Kirttaniyas* assembled there can be imagined from an estimation of the fact that not less than fourteen of them remained employed in playing fourteen *madals* (drums or tambours or *kholes*). Nobody could look unconcernedly on the scenes, which bore a glowing testimony to the supremacy and greatness of the Yogacharya. Enticed by the attractive sight, even the Mahomedans of the village felt prevailed upon to bow profoundly to Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva after a realisation of His greatness. Another remarkably curious thing happened : a noble soul, who drew his descent from Chand Kazi, appeared there with two strings of beads in his hands, the distinguishing garlands of the Mahomedans and the Vaishnavas ; and with a profound obeisance to the Yogacharya, he expressed humbly his desire for presenting Him with green cocoanuts and some sweets known in Bengal as '*batasa*'. Our revered Guru Deva, whose life was the very negation of all forms of sectarianism and communalism, nay a living embodiment of all *dharma*s (faiths), fulfilled his desire with the solemn pronouncement that he (the descendant of the Kazi) was as much of a Vaishnava as He Himself was of a Mahomedan. The articles presented by the devout, charitable Muslim were offered to Chand Kazi. And the holy *prasada* was distributed among all, Hindus and Mahomedans, assembled there. They took them with great rejoicings. Next, when the Yogacharya resumed His return journey, the holy spot, where the incident of the bursting of the *khole* had happened, was pointed out.

When this point in the passage was reached, Sj. Kalidæ

Babu said to Thakur, "I shall take You to Katwa." At this Thakur's mind was, as it were, on the wings of ecstasy and He feelingly said, "I am, indeed, strongly inclined to pay a visit to the place sanctified by association with the great Keshab Bharati !" However, the devotees made it a point to cross the *Ganga* in a small boat. The weather was calm and bright. So there was no strong wind to lash the surface of the river into high waves. But lo ! the water swelled and overflowed the boat and washed the hallowed feet of the Yogacharya ! Seeing the danger to which the accumulation of the water in the small boat exposed it, Dharmadas Babu humbly prayed our revered *Guru Deva* to be graciously pleased to stretch out His legs towards the water. But with a gesture of deep devotion to the *Ganga* He declined to grant the devotee's prayer. However, the remark was immediately followed by His absorption in *samadhi*. Taking advantage of this situation, Dharmadas Babu, accompanied by some other devotees, held out His hallowed feet to the holy water. This operation served to charm down the annoyance caused by the same.

"Lead me, O my Saviour, lead me,
Let Thine arms be round me still ;
Let Thy loving Spirit teach me,
Day by day, Thy perfect will."

Now, devotee Dharmadas had an uncle in a very bigoted Brahmana named Sj. Devendra Nath Bhattacharya who hailed from Bajrapur. He was of a highly inflammable temper and given to resent and condemn, with vehemence, what he would bethink himself of a departure from the usual customs of the Brahmanas : this was evident from

the attitude he assumed towards Dharmadas Babu on the devotee's intimation of his desire to partake of a feast which was going to be held on the occasion of *Dole-Yatra* in the residence of the Station Master, Sj. Kalidas Sarkar.

Indeed, many of the devotees gathered there on the auspicious day and performed soul-stirring *kirtanas* in the presence of the Yogacharya who had blessed the Station Master's quarters with a visit. The holy songs attracted even some *Bauls* (a class of religious enthusiasts among the modern Vaishnavas or followers of *Sri Sri Chaitanya Deva*), to whom the sight of the enchanting form of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was inspiring enough to bring out the remark, "Here is the Supreme Object to whom our thoughts are devoted !" The *sankirtanas* knew no cessation till 4 O' clock, when Sj. Dharmadas went back to his place to convey the information of his intention to participate in the previously-mentioned feast. Now, his maternal uncle's patience had been taxed to the extreme owing to his failure to see his beloved nephew for an unusually long period. And so he was aflame with rage and addressed some caustic words to the devotee. He also damned severely his (Sj. Dharmadasa's) deep wish for participation in the feast which, he remarked, should entice no Brahmana. The devotee, however, met his vehemence with a bold front and remarkable composure. These served to quiet the violence of the passion to which his uncle had fallen a victim ; nay he (Dharmadasa's uncle) even went so far as to develop an inclination to come into touch with our revered *Guru Deva*. While these scenes were passing in Sj. Dharmadasa's house, the devotees assumed the seats assigned to them in the Station Master's

quarters under the supervision of the Yogacharya. There were, however, two seats still vacant. One of them, as the *bhaktas* calculated, was destined for the accommodation of Sj. Dharmadas, who alone had not still appeared. But they were at a loss to discover why one seat more should lie arranged. Their failure to solve the problem gave rise to a debate on the point—which Sri Srimat Abadhuta Jnanananda Deva seemed to enjoy with smooth and smiling cheeks. He, however, did not suffer anybody to remove it, although He kept silence on the matter.

Meanwhile Dharmadas Babu reached the spot accompanied by his uncle ; indeed, under the elevating influence of the supremely holy association with our revered *Guru Deva*, the new-comer felt precluded from declining the offer of the Yogacharya, when He invited him to assume the remaining seat, before which there rested a quantity of *prosada*. Now, nobody had introduced the gentleman to the Yogacharya nor had He been advised of his temperament and disposition ; still, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, whose all-penetrating gaze nothing would escape, quieted his suspicion with the remark, “That is the *prosada* of the Image of *Gopala* that stands in the *kulangi* (a recess in the wall, a niche)” of the apartment, in which our revered *Guru Deva* was being entertained along with His disciples. Now, at the sight of the exquisitely beautiful Image of Gopala the new-comer was, to all appearance, affected with high emotions. And so he could not resist the impulse to pay a tribute of a profound obeisance to Guru Jnanananda Deva. It is difficult to account for the miraculous change in the conduct and behaviour of the man. Now, he implored Him, with an unusual

warmth of feeling, to be graciously pleased to allow him to have the Image. The Yogacharya, however, realized his wish afterwards.

Thereupon all partook of the holy *prasada*. Indeed, there reigned there a scene of great rejoicings not unmixed with fervour. Thakur gratified the heart-felt desire of the *bhaktas*. He was, to all appearance, overwhelmed with the feelings and sentiments natural to a boy and began to feed the *bhaktas* with His own hand in the attitude of one (a boy). The devotees too fed Him with their own hands. At that time Thakur sat on the ground on His bended knee in the posture of *Gopala*. And sometimes He put the *prasada* into His mouth and sometimes held it on His head. At this a *bhakta* sought to quiet His impetuosity with a threat, saying, "Don't spoil its sanctity ; the Mother will beat Thee !" This (of course, assumed) threat evidently affected Thakur, because thereafter He uttered lissingly 'Mother' 'Mother' and began to oscillate like a child suckled by the mother at her breast (or dandled in the mother's arms). This inspiring and interesting state of things continued till 12 o'clock. Then Thakur said, "Let the remnants of the night be passed in the enjoyment (of the bliss) of *kirtana*." At this the *bhaktas* began to sing *kirtanas* and continued till early dawn. Thus did Thakur remain awake the whole of the *Hori* festival night along with the *bhaktas*.

"So many books on morals and religion !
I have gone through them all with care :
None of them approaches the *Name* in its priceless
saving grace."

However, Sj. Dharmadasa's uncle expressed his desire for installing the Image in a newly-constructed house to be dedicated to His service and *pujah*. When matters took so remarkable a turn, the Yogacharya gave him a definite assurance that fame should in no time speak highly of this *Gopala*, who should grant every body's prayer and fulfil everybody's desire. Now, while extending a cordial welcome to the '*Gopala*', the gentleman was positive in proclaiming before the assembly that he should confer upon Him the Name of 'Nityagopal'. This proclamation astonished all, nay thrilled all with raptures. Indeed, nobody could discover why and how the gentleman felt so inspired as to utter the Name of our 'revered *Guru Deva*', although none had made any communication about it to him.

Be that as it may, the "*Gopala*" was in no time installed in the village of Bajrapur. The prophecy of the Yogacharya was literally fulfilled. The glory and powers of the Image were blown far and wide. And many, whose purposes were miraculously achieved through His grace, felt strongly inclined and attracted to Him ; nay they decorated the Image with ornaments of great consequence and dedicated various articles to Him. They also assembled in the house and performed *kirtanas* on His glory. Hence the Name of our revered *Guru Deva*, "Nityagopala", too flew from mouth to mouth. And it was not long ere it reached the several quarters of the locality ; nay the village was overflooded with the holy, inspiring Name. This paved the way for the development in many noble souls deep devotion towards the Yogacharya.

We feel impelled to touch, in this connection, upon the following points, too : Fervent prayers offered to that Image of '*Nityagopal*' by some of the *Malos* of that village for the achievement of certain purposes produced the desired effect. This prevailed upon them to have much faith in Him and offer their help and render their services, in a remarkable degree, to the noble cause of the *pujah* (worship) and *bhoga* (offering of articles of food) of the Image. As already indicated, the greatness and glory of '*Nityagopal*' were proclaimed by many devout souls through the length and breadth of the village. Thus did the message reach Sj. Beni Madhab Karmakar of the locality and he felt impelled to pray to Him for winning in a law-suit. And his object was accomplished. This is why he worshipped the Image by presenting Him with a diadem and bangles of gold and a flute of silver. He also held a great festival in honour of Him to celebrate the event. Thenceforward he began to chant and celebrate the glory of '*Nityagopal*' before the Image every day. These songs also familiarised, as already stated, many of the village of Bajrapur with the Name of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. Sj. Upendra Gupta, a gentleman of the same village, obtained in dream-state the grace of Thakur. This served to rectify, to a considerable extent, his character too. While the atmosphere of the village was being thus surcharged with the celebration of the glory of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, Dharmadas Babu once paid his visit to the same. This served to plunge him in the bliss of ecstatic love. Now, when his identity was revealed to the devout people of Bajrapur, they recognized in him a disciple of Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva and hence held him.

in deep regard. Sj. Dharmadas too chanted His Name and addressed to them words of consolation ; hence did they infer that they would in no time attain the mercy of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. While this scene was passing, the light of the day disappeared to make room for the shades of the evening. This was a signal for the devotees to assemble in the sanctuary (dedicated to '*Nityagopal*') to chant the Name and sing the glory of the Lord. The *kirttana* continued for a long time. After it had terminated, all settled that they would pay their visits to Thakur on the occasion of the coming *Janmastami* festival. But Upen Babu did not have the patience to wait till that time. So he accompanied Sj. Dharmadas to the holy place of Nabadwip. Thus did Thakur attract the *bhaktas* of Bajrapur.

Now, at the earnest entreaty of Sj. Chandra Kanta Ghosh of Haltu, Thakur thereafter accompanied him (about fifty three years back) to Gangasagar on the 28th *Paush* (January), B. S. 1302. Thence did He bend His steps (three or four days after) to Manoharpur *Ashram* (now, Mahanirvan Math) at Kalighat in Calcutta on the 3rd *Magh* (January). Here He passed a few days and then paid His auspicious visit to the house of Sj. Sasibhushan Sarkar at Sarsuna (off Behala) along with a great many *bhaktas* on the occasion of the *Dol-yatra* (or *Holi*) festival. On this holy day the *bhaktas* decorated the holy body of Thakur with garlands and adorned the lotus feet with *abir* (a red powder profusely used by the people observing the holy spring festival). They also sprinkled the powder with overwhelming love over the splendid, world-bewitching form. They danced in a rapturous mood, singing a song

just befitting the occasion. Absorbed in divine moods, Thakur sometimes stood in the posture of *Sri Krishna* with the usual bend at the leg, sometimes threw, with force, coloured (red) water on the devotees by means of a syringe, sometimes danced and sometimes turned round His finger, uttering 'Say', 'Say' ; this utterance also was accompanied with ecstatic dances. After a while the sports and the rejoicings drew to a close. And the *bhaktas* washed themselves. Then did they offer various articles of food to Thakur with deep devotion and partook of the holy *prosada* with great delight. But the red hue left on Thakur's body by the powder lasted more than even a month. The piece of cloth He wore on the festive occasion is being very carefully preserved in the (Kalighat) Mahanirvan Math temple. However, a short time elapsed after the festival, when Thakur went back to Nabadwip.

XI

RETURN TO NABADWIP FROM CALCUTTA AND THE SUBURBS

"Always magnifying Me, strenuous, firm in vows, prostrating themselves before Me, they worship Me with devotion, ever harmonised." (14) Gita, Ninth Discourse.

The devotees of Nabadwip were beside themselves with joy on finding Thakur again in their midst after a long period. Again was the atmosphere in the holy *Ashram*

kept reverberating by *kirtanas* sung in concert by the *bhaktas* in rapturous moods. Once they chanted the Name and celebrated the glory of the Divine Mother, *Kali*. Thakur was immersed in an intense spiritual mood. Then did they find, to their infinite surprise, that His tongue lolled and that the usual hue of His form was usurped by a bright dark colour. They were struck dumb and plunged in joy. Thus did they pass a long time till Thakur came down to the normal mood.

It should, however, be mentioned here that a mysterious achievement marked the commencement of the Yogacharya's career at the Ampuliapara *Ashram*; it was started for the removal of a long-felt want caused by the insufficient accommodation in the previously-mentioned holy *abode*. A ready-made house was bought. But it needed reconstruction. So, masons were employed. At a time when the construction of the roof was about to receive a finishing touch, they implored an entertainment at the hands of the Yogacharya. And He deigned to agree to accede to their request. So He directed Dharmadas Babu to purchase four seers of '*chidda*' (flattened rice to be eaten uncooked), four seers of curd, one seer of molasses and half a seer of '*golla*' (sweets). The devotee received the direction with a gesture of surprise, since there were only four heads to be entertained. Indeed, he was at a loss to gauge the mystery in which Thakur's move here remained veiled.

However, four of the bhaktas were entrusted with the duty of serving the aforesaid articles. This behaviour of

our revered Guru Deva too appeared curious. Be that as it may, the devotees were awaiting the return of the masons, when a very loud shout "Glory to Jnanananda Swami" smote upon their ears. The Yogacharya also appeared to start up. Under the instruction of our revered *Guru Deva*, Dharmadas Babu sallied forth and was amazed to see a very vast confluence of *Bauls* (a class of religious enthusiasts among the modern Vaishnavas or followers of *Sri Sri Chaitanya Deva*) numbering about 350 assembled outside the *Ashram* building. Their reply to an enquiry by *bhakta* Dharmadas intimated that they had had information from the masons about a feast to be held there. Further investigation into the matter was followed by the revelation that the masons had gone to bathe earlier than usual. This excited the curiosity of some *Bauls*, who, too, had repaired to the ghat for an ablution. So they asked the workers to enlighten them on the cause of their earlier bath. They answered that the Holy Man who had inaugurated a new *Ashram* at Ampuliapara should hold a great feast. The very pronouncement "a great feast" proved alluring to the *Bauls*, who most probably carried the tidings to their brethren. Hence they all made for the *Ashram* with the object of enjoying the feast. Devotee Dharmadas conveyed the message to the Yogacharya. Indeed, on the communication being made, He was once lost in meditation and burst into tears ; to all appearance, He felt afflicted with an intense anxiety as to how He should meet the demands of so vast a gathering. Dr. Deven Mukhopadhyaya then recalled the Yogacharya's achievement at Vidyanager. He also suggested that the resort to a kindred method would enable Him to cross over the

difficulty, to which He was then exposed. Now, any reference to His greatness and mysterious behaviour would meet with a vehement objection on the part of Sri Srimat Abadhuta Deva. So He took exception to the remark of the devout doctor and took him to task.

Now, the arrangements for the *bhoga* having been completed, Thakur was implored to offer the articles to Sri Sri Gouranga Deva. He took His seat beside the articles, that had been put in order, evidently with the object of making an offering thereof to the Lord. However, the termination of the ceremony was a signal for the *bhaktas* to devote themselves to the discharge of their responsibilities. But Dharmadas Babu alone, upon whom the task of distributing the *chidda prosada* had been imposed, was enjoined by Thakur not to look to the contents of the vessel filled with the holy thing but to go on serving the same quite liberally to the entire satisfaction of the guests. And so with a gesture from Thakur he had it covered with the skirts of his cloth and set himself to the performance of the high task. Then subject to the overpowering influence of ecstasy, the *bhaktas* called on the people, nay invited one and all to come to partake of the holy *prosada*. Thus did they devote themselves to the discharge of their responsibilities. They were astounded to see, on the termination of the great feast, that all the *Bauls* assembled there had been sumptuously fed with the small quantity of the holy *prosada*. They were also overwhelmed with wonder to discover subsequently that the articles suffered no diminution in quantity inspite of their having been lavishly distributed for the satisfaction of the large number of guests. Indeed, there prevailed

scenes of commotion and great rejoicings when the *Bauls*, in the course of their feasting, shouted, "Glory to Nityananda Abadhuta, Glory to Jnanananda Abadhuta". The Yogacharya, however, ascribed the marvellous success in the wonderful entertainment to the devotees and was again absorbed in meditation.

"We ask for wisdom ; Lord, impart
The knowledge how to live :
A wise and understanding heart
To all Thy servants give."

The second birth-anniversary, after Sj. Dharmadasa's attainment of the grace of the Yogacharya, was solemnised in the newly-founded Ampuliapara *Ashram*. It, too, was accompanied with the performance of the *Annapurna pujah*. Devotee Srinath this year discharged the offices of the priest. It should also be noted in this connection that, buffeted by untoward circumstances, Sj. Raghunath Bandyopadhyay beseeched Thakur importunately to be graciously pleased to perform some solemn rites known as *swastayana* to avert his misfortune. His passionate appeals moved Thakur to pity and to agree to grant his fervent prayer. And it was settled that the rites should be commenced at night. However, Thakur enjoined Dr. Deven Babu to fetch from the crematorium a half-eaten skull of a *Chandala* (that, He said, was lying there), after having the same covered with a new shallow, earthen vessel. The *bhakta* carried out His order. Now, the *Ashram* was crowded with a vast assemblage of devotees. The festivals were splendidly celebrated in an extremely inspiring atmosphere of fervour and joy. Indeed, many of the

devotees saw on this occasion the forms of their *Ishta-Devas* manifested from the exquisitely beautiful form of our revered *Guru Deva*. Besides, the recital of religious texts and the performance of *sankirtana* were two other remarkable features of the entertainment.

Verily, Thakur was seated close beside the Image along with the *bhaktas*. He was absorbed in divine moods. The devotees began to chant the Name and glory of God. The *kirttana* continued till 11 P. M. Now, among the guests there was one Sj. Benode Behary Goswami, who was devoted to the service of *Mahaprabhu Sri Sri Gouranga Deva* at Nabadwip, but a staunch adherent to the *Vedanta standpoint*. He said to Thakur, "How is it that You are given to perform these rites?" At this Thakur replied, "Don't you worship your mother's picture (or image or form)? My (Divine) Mother is the All-pervading Image. If I do not worship that Image, then what shall I worship? Indeed, human beings are not above physical needs. They have to eat and drink. When they have to do so, what harm will there be in making an offering to the Divine Mother of what they eat and drink and then taking the *prosada*? So long as individuals talk, they are not entitled to the position of non-duality (or extreme form of monism), which you evidently profess. He, who says (orally), "I am above the performance of action or rites," is a liar. To speak, too, is an action, indeed. When an individual becomes absorbed in *nirvikalpa samadhi*, he transcends all desires and wishes. He cannot reach this stage so long as he is conscious of 'I' and 'You' (or has 'I'-consciousness and 'You'-consciousness). So long as

this twofold consciousness (or the consciousness of duality) is not crossed over, there should or must be an 'Object of desire'. That very 'Object' is *SriKrishna*, is *Kali*. My friend, My (Divine) Mother is an Affectionate Lady absolutely free from desires. *Krishna* is My Amiable Husband quite above desires." These solemn utterances of Thakur, nay these broad gleams of illumination He shed on the interpretation of the claims of dualism struck Benode Babu dumb. Although he professed the Vedanta standpoint, he was vanquished in reasoning by Thakur. Hereafter there appeared in the *Ashram* Sj. Bisweswar Chakrabarty, late Headmaster, Nabadwip Hindu School, and Benode Babu, another teacher of the same institution, and Sj. Ananda Roy. They partook of the *prosada* and went back to their homes. Their departure was immediately followed by the arrival of one Sj. Devendranath Chakrabarty. He was scrupulously attached to orthodox rites observed by the Vaishnavas and well-known as '*Jai Nitai*'. He came to the *Ashram*, singing *kirttana* songs. Although he was an orthodox Vaishnava, he presented himself to the holy place for taking the *prosada* of the Divine Mother, *Annapurna*. He was richly endowed with a deep humility of spirit. On seeing him Thakur requested him to take his seat. But Deven Babu laid, with deep reverence, his forehead on the hallowed feet and prostrated himself before them. Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva sought, as was His wont, to resist him, saying, "What are you doing ? What are you doing ? I am not given to wear a rosary nor to count the beads of one nor to bear the sectarian marks made with sandal-paste (or other things). So I am not a Vaishnava proper nor recognised as such."

At these words Deven Babu felt sentimentally affected and burst into tears and said, "Ah ! it is for reaching (or revering) You that men do those things. Of what use are they to You ?" Thakur pushed the matter no further but asked him, "Would you accept the Divine Mother's *prosada* ?" The devout Vaishnava said, "I will accept as *maha* (great) *prosada* whatever You will favour me." But this reply did not satisfy Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. So He again asked him, "No, please let me know if you are going to take the (Divine) Mother's *prosada* ." At this Deven Babu said, "I am going to take the (Divine) Mother's *prosada* ." Then did Thakur shout in a rapturous mood, '*Hari*', '*Hari*' and remark, "Such devotion to *Hari* cannot be reached without the grace of the Divine Mother !" Indeed, Deven Babu partook of the *prosada* with deep devotion and left the *Ashram* uttering '*Jai Nitai*' (glory to *Nitai* or *Prabhu Nityananda*).

However, what lent additional enchantment to the functions was the performance by the Yogacharya of solemn rites (technically characterised as *swastayana*) for propitiating the planets and Deities in order to avert an evil that had threatened the previously-mentioned Raghunath Bandyopadhyay *mahasaya* with the ruin of all his possessions. On the eve of the commencement of the ceremonies, He invited Raghunath Babu to take his seat. He also took His position beside the previously-mentioned, half-eaten skull of a *Chandala* (an outcaste, a man of the lowest of the mixed castes, being the offspring of a Brahmin mother by a Sudra father), that lay covered on the left side of the Image of the Goddess *Annapurna*. He then put

into its mouth the ingredients of the *pujah*. Miraculous, indeed, was the influence exerted by the operation, inasmuch as it (the skull) sent forth a loud and violent laughter. The sight, coupled with the sound, inspired dread in the minds of the observers, nay it made them shudder. But the Yogacharya met the laughter with one no less impressive. The amazing behaviour on the part of both continued till the skull addressed Sj. Raghunath in a very loud voice by his title and enquired if he desired the destruction of his (Sj. Raghunath's) enemy. In reply Raghunath Babu expressed, with tears in his eyes, his desire to have his property restored to him without such an evil being allowed to befall his enemy. The skull assured him of its fulfilment. Next, when the Yogacharya commanded it (evidently the spirit that had appeared inside the skull) to go back to its own abode, the skull ceased shouting.

Our revered *Guru Deva*, however, was not given to perform such rites. But the earnest entreaties and repeated prayers of the distressed devotee moved Him, as already indicated to embark upon such a course of action for the sake of his consolation.

XII

THAKUR'S VISIT TO THE STAR THEATRE IN CALCUTTA AND AFTER

"He is a *forgiving* God ; kind to the distressed,
Responsive to love, and *merciful* always.
The Divine Herdsman places Himself at the head of
His straying flock,
And feeds them, one and all.

.....

Whoever worships Him is cleansed,
And is attached to love and devotion."

During His stay at Nabadwip Thakur would at times go forth to Calcutta. His arrival here was one night followed by a visit to the Star theatre. His presence in the assembly created a commotion, inasmuch as a great many individuals including actors of the eminence and standing of Sj. Amrita Mittra, Amrita Bose, Behary, and Nepa sallied forth and rendered their devotions to Him. The actors felt so interested in entertaining Him that even the concert, which had been in full swing, was stopped. In honour of His visit a drama on "*Sitar banabash*" (the Banishment of *Sita*) was enacted by a total change of the previously-framed programme. The play commenced. To all appearance, it captured His imagination, since the parts of *Rama* and *Sita* acted by the players plunged Him in *samadhi*. Attracted by the sight, Sj. Amrita Bose volunteered to fan Him. The

representation drew to a close by degrees. In the meantime Thakur came down to the relative plane of consciousness. And Amrita Babu begged of Him earnestly to pass the remnants of the night there. But Thakur declined to accede to his request, saying, "I shall pass them at Nimtola." Amrita Babu, however, did not take it to heart, since he knew Thakur's temperament. Indeed, failing to detain Him there, he said, "You are Self-willed ; even Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva could not prevail upon You to do anything contrary to Your will. This is why He would say, 'Nitya is Self-willed ; He can renounce His body, if He wills.'" However, Thakur Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva left the theatre uttering '*Narayan*', '*Narayan*'. The *bhaktas* followed Him. They wanted to hire a car. But Thakur forbade them, saying, "No ; it is a fine, moon-lit night ! Let us go on talking together." That was done. Thakur repaired to *bhakta* Dharmadasa's place at dead of night and stayed there.

Then, morning arose not in unclouded splendour but with a veil of clouds accompanied with a downpour. Now, Sj. Upen Goswami (a nephew of devotee Keshavananda Swami), who regarded Thakur as his Grand-father, proposed to entertain Him with *khichuri* (a dish composed of rice and pulse, seasoned with salt and spices). He was under the impression that Thakur was given to eat up whatever would be served before Him. In order to make a fun and also a trial, he placed a very large quantity of the meal for His dinner. It was likely to appease perfectly the hunger of a great many individuals. However, the Yogacharya could realize his motive and asked him if he was prepared to meet further demands. To the utter surprise of Upen

Babu, He exhausted all the fare within a brief while and demanded more. So, the Goswami offered Him about one seer more of the substance. Now the Yogacharya warned him to be ready for a fresh supply. Then, Upen Babu requested Him to proceed less quickly in order that he might be allowed sufficient time for preparing the food anew.

However, from Sj. Dharmadasa's place Thakur bent His steps to Sj. Giris Ghose's at Baghbazar. He revealed Himself as the Supreme Being possessed of six Lordly powers to Giris Babu's younger brother, Sj. Atul Krishna Ghose, his son, Sj. Surendranath Ghose (better known as Dani Babu), and his 'Na didi' (third (elder) sister) Indeed, Atul Babu saw the divine form of *Kali-Krishna* manifested in the body of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. Here did Thakur pass a few days and then made His way to Sorsuna via Kalighat. Now, at Sorsuna His disciple, Sj. Sasi Ghosh, lent Him the use of a secluded room in his house. The door thereof would remain closed throughout the whole day till the evening. It was during His stay at Sorsuna that Dharmadas Babu, accompanied by Sj. Kalicharan Bhattacharya, repaired to the house for paying their reverences to the Lord. On seeing Kalicharan Babu, Thakur asked him to sing a song. And the *bhakta* sang one from Nilkantha's '*Padabali*' (wreaths of stanzas). Sung with deep devotion, it plunged Thakur in divine moods. And, drunk with eesthetic love, He exhorted the *bhakta* repeatedly to sing the same song. Thus was it chanted seventeen times. And, as a result, he remained occupied with the noble task throughout the whole night.

However, Thakur passed a short period at Sorsuna and then turned His steps to Nadabdwip along with His *bhaktas*.

We feel inclined to mention in this connection that once a famous amateur party, organized by *bhakta* Dharmadas, was invited by the aristocrats of Murhagachha to enact a beautiful drama composed by the devotee. On the termination of all the Acts which it consisted of, the players were seized with an impatient yearning after resuming their return journey. Sj. Dharmadas had to yield to their solicitations. Therefore, they all set forth and reached Edrakpur at dead of night and shouted after the name of the ferry-man for being ferried over. On that night the ferry-man, Jadu, was away from his station of duty. So, all their shouts were of little avail. Indeed, as no help was forthcoming, the players were exposed to a precarious condition in such a period on the lonely bank of the *Ganga* where there was no trace of human habitation. That being the Bengali month of *Bhadra* (August), the bosom of the *Ganga* extended far and wide. So, a vast, awe-inspiring sheet of water met their eyes, as they looked before.

And hence some of the players gave way to despondency and despair and some prayed fervently to God for deliverance from such a sad plight. Under their pressure Dharmadas Babu, too, appealed to the Supreme. His appeal was followed by an immediate response, inasmuch as a boat was found advancing with unusual speed towards them. And when it touched the bank, a man jumped down. Seen by *bhakta* Dharmadas from behind, he resembled

Thakur. But the devotee attached little importance to the matter. And the players, who were mostly expert in rowing, laid upon their shoulders the task of driving the boat. It moved on till a point in the journey was reached, when its advance was resisted by the strong current of the river. So all their efforts for hurrying it forward were baffled. When exposed to such a perilous situation, their strong nerves seemed to yield. And hence they bethought themselves of the absolute necessity of exhorting the ferryman to come now to their succour. But lo ! the boat appeared to be manned by no driver. Now, the misapprehension and ignorance of the great, divine contrivance, which had been ruling and controlling the course of the boat, subjected the members of the amateur party to great trepidation ; they also awakened in them a strong suspicion that they had fallen a prey to the machinations of an evil spirit. But a different current of thoughts asserted its sway in the mind of devotee Dharmadas ; and so he now exhorted his colleagues to resign themselves totally to the mercy of God and shout in the Name of '*Hari*'. Indeed, an appeal made to the Lord with whole-hearted devotion was followed by quite unexpected and unforeseen consequences, inasmuch as the boat now hurried of itself, with abnormal speed, on to the post where it would remain tied. The players then jumped down with all alacrity begotten by a sense of quite unexpected deliverance from the jaws of a peril.

Dharmadas Babu, however, stepped forth to the holy Ampuliapara Ashram, the door of which remained still closed. But a devotee undid it in obedience to the order of Thakur, who communicated to the *bhakta* the tidings of

Sj. Dharmadasa's arrival. And then extending His arm through the small window of His room, Thakur said to him, "Dhamai, let Me have the pice for ferrying you over. I had been waiting, unasked, on the bank of the *Ganga* for doing so." This joyful, amazing intimation excited in the heart of the devotee high emotions of delight and wonder which proved so overwhelming that he sank senseless on the ground. However, he aptly commemorated the wonderful event by holding a feast in honour of it. Indeed, let this song burst forth from every devout soul in the fulness of joy :

"Great God of Wonders ! All Thy ways
Are worthy of Thyself—Divine ;
But the bright glories of Thy grace
Beyond Thine other wonders shine.

...

Though weak, and cleaving to the dust,
My soul adores Thee still ;
Thy grace and truth are all my trust,
Oh, mould me to Thy will "

Then, one evening Thakur descended into a cave a little below the elevated bank of the *Ganga*. Dharmadas Babu was in attendance. They took their position about fifty yards off from the water-mark. Now ensued a conference between Thakur and the devotee. In the course of this conversation, the Yogacharya enlightened him on some aspects of the 'Real *Ganga*'. Indeed, He observed, "True wisdom is *Ganga*. The water of the *Ganga*, that meets the gaze of an ignorant or ordinary individual, is *maya-bari* (the illusive water). Behind this exterior there lurks *Karana bari* (the causal water), which appears,

when a great soul (i.e. one who has acquired divine wisdom) takes his bath in the *Ganga*." Then He invited him with a smile to see the 'Real *Ganga*'. *Bhakta* Dharmadas now fixed his eyes on the extensive space between 'the cave' and the Swarupganj bridge. The waters now presented the look of 'molten silver'. They seemed to be brightened with a search-light that remains attached to a steamer. In fact, they flashed such lustre as is likely to radiate from silver when burnt with fire. Greater was the devotee's astonishment, when he saw them swelling so high as to come into touch with the holy feet of Thakur. They, however, receded in obedience to the direction given by Him for that purpose.

Now, for more reasons than one we feel prompted to insert, in the following paragraphs, the English renderings of some parts of a book (by Thakur), entitled "*Divya Darsan*" (Divine Visions), which records some interesting, important and enlightening accounts of revelations received by some *bhaktas* :

"Dharmadas said to Thakur on the 23rd *Paush* (January) in B. S. 1301 (about fifty four years back), "I went to the village of Ganganibash to pay my reverences to the Image of *Hari-Hara*.....to-day..... I set my eyes on all objects inside the temple through a small window and saw You instead of *Hari-Hara*. Then, while, after observing, with deep devotion, that form of Yours, I was returning, I had a sight of *Hari-Hara* seated in the air with His face turned towards me. I watched Him thus for about half a mile."

Once in the Bengali month of *Falguna* (February-March) while a *kirttana* was in progress, Dharmadas,

Govinda and some other *bhaktas* saw the usual complexion of Nitya's (Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva's) body changed into dark and yellow colours..... On that (a particular) day they observed Nitya to be of a red hue merely.

On another day Dharmadas Roy represented to Thakur, ".....Once very early in the morning in this month of *Paush* (December, January) my uncle, Tarini, while still lying in bed, was feeling inclined to go out to receive rents from some tenants. At that time he was not at all thinking of You, nay he was not even remembering You. Then, all of a sudden, it seemed to him as if You were talking in that room of his. He was startled, nay mightily surprised at it ; he began to listen quite attentively and earnestly to it in amazement. In that state he heard You address him. At this he got up eagerly from his bed and saw You in that very room. After having thus a sight of You, he began to bow low to You again and again. To Tarini thus saluting You repeatedly You said with a smiling face, "Tarini, I have been graciously pleased with You. Are you not inclined to have faith in (or bear reverence for) this form of Mine ? Are You not inclined to bear love towards this form of Mine ?" So saying You assumed a new form. Tarini delineated it thus : "From the waist downwards it resembled this one of Yours. It was seated in the same posture of *yoga* in which You are very often found sitting. From the waist upwards it resembled *Tara* (One of the ten *Mahavidyas*) ; these parts thereof were of a bright blue colour. It had four hands. Its head was adorned with charming matted hair. It had three eyes. Each of its hands (or arms), which resembled in all respects those

of *Tara*, was furnished with a weapon held in it (each hand) by the Goddess. It radiated masses of rays that can stream forth from a great many suns. Nobody could set his eyes constantly on the lustre of that form. It was full of great solemnity." That form said in a solemn, thunderous voice, "Tarini, are you inclined to have faith in (or regard for) this divine form of Mine ? Do you want to be a worshipper of this form ?" Tarini stood still like one who is at a loss to know what should be done or like an inert object. He was not in a position to see or ascertain what answer he should give (to that question). He was struck dumb ; he was overwhelmed with fear mingled with devotion ; in this state he kept gazing steadfastly at that wonderful form he had never seen or heard of before. While he was observing it, that form, the upper half of which resembled *Tara*, was transformed into that of *SriKrishna*. He (Tarini) watched for a while that Supreme Lord *SriKrishna* with great delight, nay thrills of joy which effected the erection of the hair of his body ; but He (*SriKrishna*) vanished without delay and so Tarini could see Him no longer.

In *Falgun* (February-March.) B.S. 1303, Kalidas Bandyopadhyaya of Charcharapar of SriNabadwip saw "Nitya" transformed into *Chaitanya* possessed of six hands.

On the last day of the month of *Falgun* (March) Dharmadas said to Thakur, "To-day at noon I saw You assuming a form measuring two fingers in size ; at that time You were furnished with the colour of *Krishna-Gopal* and found sitting in His posture. Then Your body was radiating blue lustre."

Once, in *Agrahayana* (November-December) in B.S.

1304, Dharmacharya Sreejut Dharmadas Roy saw in the last watch of the night Sri Sri Nityagopal in his house in the state not of dream but of waking. But at that time that Thakur was lying and sleeping, indeed, in the *Ashram* of the *Sadhu* (Thakur) at *Sridham* Nabadwip. That noble Roy was watching Nityagopal, when all of a sudden He was found transformed into *Durga* possessed of ten hands. Then did he suddenly come across many ornaments of gold lying beside him. He decorated with joy (the body of) that *Nityagopal-Durga* with those.

On the first day of *Jyaistha* (May) 1306 B.S., Lakshmimani of Kashi (pointing to Nitya) said to Dinatarini of Nabadwip. "See how bright yellow (in colour) the lotus feet of Thakur have grown." Tarini : "I too find them to be so." After observing them (the feet) in that condition for about three hours, she said, "This time I find the lotus feet to be in part of a bright yellow colour and in part of a bright white colour. Now the great toes are adorned with rings either of diamond or of bright silver. This time the feet have fully assumed that colour."

To-night (the 13th *Sravan* (July), 1306 B.S.) Nimai Datta of Nabadwip has renounced his earthly frame at 12 or 12-30. He suffered from phthisis for about five years. Even while suffering from that fell disease, he would now and then see divine Visions. Once, during his stay at Hooghly and some time before his arrival at this *Sridham* Nabadwip, he heard at noon his supremely revered *Guru Deva* (Thakur) impart instructions to him after assuming the divine

body of *Gopala*. At that time He (his *Guru Deva*) conveyed to him beforehand an intimation about (the time of) his death. He told him (Nimai) also to prepare himself for it (death). He also gave him (Nimai) an account of how he had had to eat the meat of a she-goat. Then, on enquiry, he learnt that really he had had to do so without his knowledge. The day, on which he saw his most venerable *Guru Deva* (seated) on his chest, was associated with *Amavasya tithi* (i.e. the day on which the moon comes in between the sun and the earth so that the three are in the same right line); this is why the ingredients requisite in worshipping the Goddess *Kali* had been sent on it to Kalighat at such a time that they might be dedicated to the Divine Mother (of Kalighat) in the morning and thus She might be duly worshipped. But the man, entrusted with the sacred duty, had the ceremonies performed not at the time fixed but at noon. Nimai's *Guru Deva* conveyed to him beforehand this news, too, after ascending his chest. But He assured him that the Mother was accepting the articles offered to Her with devotion and that the rites were being performed during the auspicious period of *Amavasya*. Nimai subsequently learnt, on enquiry, that his most venerable *Guru Deva*'s account tallied with facts.

On the 22nd *Sravana* (August), 1306 B.S., Dharmadas said to Nitya, ".....The *Vaishnavi* named *Kumudini*, who lives under the protection of Sreejut Bireswar Chakravarthy of Goari, set herself the task of repeating the *mantram* the (mystic formula) regarding her Chosen and Favourite Deity at about 10 O'clock on the last *Bhim*

Ekadasi (the eleventh day in the light half of the month of *Magha* (January-February). While she was occupied with the work, she found the room, in which she was muttering prayers, brilliantly illuminated with white but intensely bright, divine lustre. Even after a short while she saw You in the midst of the light. Then You said to her, "See, this is My true Self or form." Scarcely had You said so, when You were transformed into *Shiva* and remarked, "The form that you see now is My real form, indeed. Observe this to-day." The *Vaishnabi* remained absorbed in ecstasy on that day from 10 O'clock till almost the evening and enjoyed divine bliss. After making strenuous efforts Bireswar Babu brought her to her senses with great difficulty."

In 1306 B. S., Sj. Rajani kantha Mittra, Munsiff, Goari, had been suffering tremendously from a malady for a long time. During the period of his sickness he earnestly desired to see *Sri Jnanananda*. As a result of his intense longing, he had, all of a sudden, a sight of Jnanananda, while he was wide awake. He saw, even while he was bed-ridden, that Jnanananda had taken His seat near his head and begun to stroke it gently with His hand. The Munsiff showed Him the different parts of his house and held talks with Him on various subjects. Now, during the time Jnanananda passed at the residence of the Munsiff, He was present at *Sreedham* Nabadwip ; many of the people of the holy town saw this.

Once *bhakta* Satis said to Thakur, "The night, on which Khoka Mali decorated Your body exquisitely with various articles of dress, flowers, garlands and a necklace of (false) skulls, I saw You assume first the form of

Goddess *Kali* and then that of Goddess *Durga* possessed of ten hands.....All of a sudden all the parts of Your body from foot to head turned black by degrees ; then I saw Your four hands, which were furnished with a scimitar, a head, a boon and assurance of security, then Your lolling tongue, then Your dishevelled hair and then a divine crown instead of the artificial one with which Khoka Mali or Chandrahari Mali had adorned Your head. While I was enjoying this Vision, I intensely desired to see my *Ishta Devata* and I prayed to You for the fulfilment of my desire. During the period I remained occupied with the prayer, the Divine Mother, *Kali*, was by degrees transformed into the Divine Mother, *Durga* ; this latter form I kept steadfastly gazing at.....While I was watching You assuming the forms of *Kali* and *Durga*, I was perfectly aware of the outer world.....”

In fact, when Thakur flourished with all His greatness and mysterious doings in the glorious Ampuliapara *Ashram*, a very devout Vaishnava would often seek an interview with Him. The sight of the exquisite beauty, extraordinary elegance and majesty of His form would thrill him with the emotions of supreme love and joy. And nobody could say why he would address Him sometimes as *Radha* and sometimes as *Krishna* and implore Him, with a profound reverence, to reveal His True Self.

Once a garland was sent by the devout soul for the use of Thakur. He wore it in the attitude of *Radha* and made for His apartment in the state of ecstasy, when a lizard dropped from the roof on His holy foot. He was startled up and addressed to the creature, that sank dead on the holy spot, a few angry words, of which the following

formed the concluding part, " Oh lizard ! you have ever become a source of annoyance to Me ! "

The circumstance excited the curiosity of the *bhaktas* ; and when they gained admittance into His presence, they were amazed to see an Image of *Vishnu* portrayed on the spot of the foot where the fortunate creature had expired. Hence the devotees inferred that the lizard was not an ordinary animal. So they buried it under a *Tulasi* plant under His instruction and celebrated its miraculous death by the holding of a great feast.

However, once, on the occasion of the solar eclipse, Thakur stepped forth towards the *Ganga*, attended by the *bhaktas* including Sj. Kalidas Bandyopadhyay. A *kirttana* was then performed in the Station Master's quarters. It was continued with unabated zeal and fervour till 4 O' Clock, when Thakur, who had been lost in ecstasy, made for the *Ganga* with the eyes still closed. The passage was celebrated by association with the exquisite dance He often indulged in. He now presented an enchanting, awe-inspiring look. Tears rolled down His eyes incessantly. While these scenes were passing in the procession of the '*Nitya bhaktas*,' the famous Srimat Charandas *Babaji*, formerly known as Sj. Rajendra Babu, proceeded towards the *Ganga* in the company of his adherents, performing *kirttana* with deep devotion. Kalidas Babu now ushered him into the holy presence of Thakur at whose hallowed feet he (Charandas *Babaji mahasaya*) fell prostrate. Thakur, though still in the state of superconsciousness, held him by the hand with two fingers and made him dance. It was a very happy union. Thakur addressed to the devout soul words none else

could understand. He now went forth to the place of Kalidas Babu, followed by the happy band. A stirring song was then sung by the *Babaji mahasaya* at the top of his voice. It attracted a vast confluence of *bhaktas*. Thakur danced ; so did Srimat Charandas too. Pieces of sweets, known in Bengal as *batasa*, were scattered in the Name of *Hari*.

An inkling into the doing of Thakur here excited wonder in the hearts of the observers. Many of them marvelled to see a seat established in the air. On this seat was placed an Image of *Gopala*. The *bhaktas* danced round about it. But to none else perhaps the sight proved so overwhelming as to Srimat Charandas ; now subjected to the accession of feelings, which would be excited in the hearts of the cowherdesses of Brindaban at the sight and thought of *Sri Krishna*, the *Babaji mahasaya* danced in joy, saying, "There is my beloved Lord who has stolen my heart !"

It should be noted here that Srimat Radharaman-charandas *Babaji* developed so much attachment for Thakur that he would now and then visit Him and be united with Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva in the midst of *kirtanas*. The *Babaji* would call Him '*Swamiji*'.* Now, a critical estimate of Srimat Charandas's dealings with Thakur suggests that he developed towards Him the same attitude of supreme, stainless and divine love (represented in the Aryan scriptures as the sweet,

* The term '*Swamiji*' is usually employed in addressing a Sannyasin. It may also mean 'Venerablehusband' ; Srimat Charandas might use it in the latter sense.

wife-like attitude) as *SriRadha* bore (or bears) towards *SriKrishna*. It cannot reach a full-fledged development in an individual (male or female) so long as he (or she) has even an atom of lust in him or her. However, Thakur, who knew the the noble *Babaji*'s heart and appreciated his sentiments, would welcome him in a way quite befitting his attitude. So, once He said to His disciples in an ecstatic mood, "Hola ! let My head be decorated with a fancy hair-parting in the left side ; My wife is coming to see Me." The same day while the *bhaktas* were enjoying, in the evening twilight, celestial bliss in the holy company of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, the great-souled *Babaji mahasaya* made his appearance there, chanting, in a melodious voice, the Names and glories of God along with his devotees. The enchanting and stirring *kirttana* kept the atmosphere reverberating. It threw Thakur into an ecstatic mood. In that state He came into union with the *Babaji mahasaya*. The happy union was immediately followed by ecstatic dances on both parts. After a while Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva stood still like an Image of *Sri-Krishna* in a picture. Srimat Charandas, too, was prompted by an inner urge (that is, by the ecstatic emotions of a sweet-heart) to take his stand, in a state of inspiration, on His left in the same posture. Both of them passed about two hours in that condition, unconscious of the outer world. This wonderful behaviour of Thakur and Srimat Charandas produced in the assembled devotees thrills of astonishment and bursts of admiration. Indeed, it proved extremely inspiring to them and served to remind them of the

lila (sports and pastimes) of *SriKrishna* and *SriRadha*. They were mysteriously driven to be divided into two parties. One of them identified itself with *Shuka* (the male bird, distinguished for his admiration for *SriKrishna*) and the other with *Sari* (the female bird, the well-known admirer of *SriRadha*). Indeed, there arose between them what may be represented as a controversy or verbal contest (of course, of love), in which the one highly complimented the superior excellence of *SriKrishna* and the other that of *Sri Radha*. However, towards the conclusion of the *lila* (sport) Thakur clasped the hand of Srimat Charandas, a man of very robust constitution, nay a stalwart figure ; and he fell down with a tremendous force on a brick-built flight of steps. This exposed him to the danger of being seriously wounded. But, to their infinite surprise, the *bhaktas* found that he had not been hurt in the least. Now, as soon as the noble *Babaji* fell down Thakur, still in a state of ecstasy, placed His foot on his chest. Then did the *bhaktas* place a chair behind Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, who sat on the same after a while. In the mean time the blessed *Babaji* came to his senses. Thereupon Thakur took him in the arms and caressed him by gently stroking his back with the hand. This was followed by their conversation with each other. In the course of the dialogue Thakur said to him, "Do your duties (or go on working) ; I am not in a good state of health." The noble *Babaji* said, "The condition of Mayapur (most probably Nabadvip) frightens me very much." At this Thakur again said, "Never mind ; don't fear ; go on working, I say." Then were the holy

sweets (cakes made of sugar or molasses boiled and blown) offered to 'Hari' (represented in Bengali as 'Hari-loot') distributed among the devotees. The great-souled Charandas took his leave and turned his steps to his residence, singing *kirttana* along with his followers. After a short while Thakur went inside the *Ashram*. It goes without saying that the *Babaji mahasaya* carried out His order. *

"With Thy presence I can conquer,
I can suffer, I can die ;
Otherwise I faint and languish—
O my Saviour ! be Thou nigh."

However, once, at dead of night, when the whole town of Nabadwip seemed to be bathed in the pleasant, white rays of the moon and to submit to a reign of calm peace, Thakur proceeded to the *Ganga* in the company of Sj. Dharmadas and took His seat on the elevated bank of the river at 'Poraghata.' Now, Dharmadas Babu had been for some time perceiving a dripping of very small particles of water over his body. But he had slighted over it, thinking it to be a figment of imagination. But a communication Thakur now made to him awakened him from his slumber. It also enabled him to realize that those had been dropping upon him, through the grace of the Yogacharya, from the *Mandakini* (the celestial *Ganga*) in heaven.

Thakur now passed on to another topic. He said that there are many things in the limitless Universe, which remain invisible to the unenlightened, limited vision of ignorant human beings. "There", He added,

vision of ignorant human beings. "There," He added, "shines the moon in the sky. It looks like a plate. But, in fact, it is a world two times wider than the globe we live in." These remarks were followed by His hand being laid on the body of Dharmadas Babu. The world of the Moon now came in part within the pale of his vision enlightened and strengthened by the holy touch. To his limited gaze, as Thakur declared, that limitless world as a whole should remain impervious. He could, however, catch sight of merely a town (of limited area like Nabadwip) of that world, where dwells the Presiding Deity of the Moon. The Deity has, as he saw, a building destined for His accommodation; it resembles a temple in shape; whatever belongs to the world appeared to be made of "molten Moon". Nothing on earth, however translucent and bright, can, as the bhakta realized, stand in comparison with it.

But it was not Dharmadas Babu alone who was entitled to the supreme mercy of Thakur but He showered His blessings on his father and grand-mother too. Hence it can be inferred that the other members of the blessed family also basked in the sunshine of His grace.

Now, once, when Sj. Mati Roy was busy performing a *yatra* (a dramatic entertainment) in a place far removed from Nabadwip, his mother fell a victim to a serious malady to which she succumbed. When her condition became precarious, Thakur advised her transportation to the *Ganga* on the eve of the failure of the life-breath. Fortunate, indeed, was the lady, since she was blessed with His sight before she took eternal leave of all nearest

and dearest to her. Sj. Dharmadas magnificently discharged his duty towards her, inasmuch as he uttered the Name of '*Hari*' a thousand times to her ear. Meanwhile her pulse was at a stand-still ; this was a signal for the performance of the funeral rites. But as soon as she expired Dharmadas Babu marvelled to see her grandmother ascending towards the Solar region (*Suryaloka*) in an extremely brilliant form.

"In the Valley of Death where the way is long and tedious,
The *Name* of God will there be your provision ;
And in the darkness and confusion of that way
The *Name* shall gild for you the gloom.
Where there is no acquaintance for you
You will find in the *Name* a friend to go with you.
In the terrible blaze of the sun and sultry heat,
The *Name* of God will serve you as a shade.
When you feel the parching thirst, O soul !
The grace of God will send you down a shower of
the *nectar-Name*."

However, under the instruction of Thakur Sj. Matilal Roy performed the *sraaddha* ceremony by the strictest observance of the ritualistic details at Bhatsala. Thakur took charge of the entertainment of the poor and the destitute. About ten thousand beggars were perfectly satisfied with the alms distributed among them by the holy hands. He totally abstained from partaking of any food, solid or liquid, till His responsibilities were fully discharged. Amply gratified with His entertainment, the beggars shouted in the Name of "*Hari*" ; the shout seemed to penetrate to His heart, inasmuch as He was lost in ecstasy.

The night expired making room for the dawn, which was hailed with the commencement of a *kirttana* on '*Gopi-gostha*'. The divine song paved the way for Thakur's absorption in "*nirvvikalpa-samadhi*", which was attended with the failure of pulsation. Now, on the occasion of the ceremony many eminent physicians were invited. They were called on to see how, even when the pulse ceased to beat, one could survive. Indeed, the doctors were astounded to discover that all their knowledge and experience did not avail to diagnose the wonderful affection of the body of Thakur. Many of the assembly, who had thought that the greatest evil had befallen Him, were eventually disillusioned, when, on the commencement of a song on the Name of God, He performed ecstatic dances. Nobody could look on His behaviour unconcernedly, inasmuch as it attracted from him the spontaneous tribute of a deep obeisance. Many cried, "Lord *Gour-Hari* has reincarnated Himself in that Form!" Few perhaps were so much impressed with His greatness and supremacy and mercy as Sj. Matilal Roy. Indeed, he had at first addressed Him by the Name of *Dinabandhu* (the Supreme Lord, the Friend of the poor) and then asked Him, with his hands folded through deep devotion and face bathed in tears, if his duties towards the departed soul had been adequately discharged. The enquiry was met with a gracious reply which gave him supreme satisfaction.

"Father of eternal grace, glorify Thyself in me,

 Poor, weak, and worthless though I am !
 I have a rich Almighty Friend..."

Verily, in those days there lived in Nadia (Nabadwip) many noble souls who were distinguished for their deep devotion to Lord *Gouranga Deva*. Among them Radheshyama *Baba* (formerly known as Sj. Ramlall Mitra) was recognised as a prominent *sadhaka*. His name bore a lofty standing here. He was held in high esteem and reverentially called "Baba" (father) by Srimat Radharamanharandas *Babaji mahashaya*. Once that devout soul called at Thakur's *Ashram* to pay his respects to Him. Thakur hailed him with, "Are you alright ?" At this Mitra *mahashaya* said feelingly with folded hands, "The period of my residence in the blessed Nabadwipdham is drawing to a close. Now have I made up my mind to pass the remainder of my life in the holy city of Brindaban. This is why I have come to obtain permission from and take leave of You." On hearing this Thakur appeared to be emotionally stirred and sentimentally affected, since His eyes were suffused with tears. And He said in a choked voice, "Verily, this is "*gupta*" (veiled) Brindaban ; don't you feel it convenient for you to remain here ? Well ! would you go to Brindaban ? That's all right." Scarcely had Thakur addressed those words to the devout soul, when He uttered to himself three or four times in a very faint voice and in whispers, "Brindaban, Brindaban." While His intense emotion was thus finding vent through that utterance, He was immersed in the ocean of a deep, beatific trance. Indeed, 'ecstatic fits started racking His nerves.' His limbs fell a prey to violent, involuntary spasms so much so that His whole body was violently shaken, nay the bones inside struck against one another with a sound. Tears rolled down the eyes which had been closed under-

the overwhelming pressure of spiritual intoxication. His cheeks were flooded with and the part of the cloth with which His chest was covered, was drenched in them. He had the hairs of the body erected. The horripillation was followed by the change of the colour of His body. This sight proved too overwhelming to Mitra *mahashaya*. And he prostrated himself tremblingly at the hallowed feet of Thakur with profound reverence. Evidently the devout soul must have been very much impressed by Thakur's 'beaming spirituality, all-encompassing sympathy, all-absorbing love, ecstatic talks, penetrating vision and sparkling wit and the highest phase of ecstatic love that evidently surged in His heart. However, it took His mind about an hour to come down to a lower plane from the dizzy heights of spiritual consciousness and of ecstatic moods.' Then did He utter again and again, "*Narayan*, say '*Hari*!'" Indeed, when the normal state of mind was gradually restored to Mitra *mahashaya* also, he said with faltering words, "What more shall I say ? Please do not forget me." Then Thakur said, "All right ! then you may go, but I tell you definitely that you *shall* have to come back to and reside in this very place. May you fare well by the grace of God !" It goes without saying that not long afterwards the devout Mitra returned to Nabadwip and lived here.

"Trust in the Lord ; He can supply
The wisdom each one needs ;
Whilst they who on themselves rely,
Lean upon broken reeds."

However, once a small dog took shelter in the Ampuliaspara *Ashram*. It was, indeed, a fortunate animal, since, on one occasion, Thakur placed His holy foot on its head. In

course of time it developed a noble instinct of subsisting on nothing but His holy *prosada* and keeping watch on the *Ashram* during the night like the most devoted sentinel. Its devotion was amply requited by the favourite name of 'Nityadas' (servant of the Eternal) being conferred upon it. It marvellously developed in body at the advent of youth, inasmuch as it presented the awe-inspiring look of a tiger. Besides, there was something in its appearance which was rich in suggestiveness. Another remarkable trait of its character was its abstinence from sexual intercourse with bitches ; nay it was found to frighten away, with a furious barking and gaze, a bitch that, attracted by its lovely appearance, sought to allure it to an immoral course of action. The sight gave Thakur much pleasure. He clapped His hands with the applause, "See, a dog has been purified of the passion of lust !" Then He passed into ecstasy with the pronouncement, "Glory to *Kali*." The dog now lay prostrate at the holy feet. After a time it expired with the holy foot resting on the crown of its head. Then He advised the burial of its body beside the *Ganga* with the declaration that it was a harmonised sage that had appeared in the form of the carrier of 'Bhairava.' So a feast, attended with the performance of the *pujah* of *Bhairava*, and *sankirtana*, was held in honour of the blessed dog.

"His love what deepest thought can reach,
What mortal tongue display ?
Imagination's utmost stretch
In wonder dies away."

In fact, the holy *Ashram* of Ampuliapara had an atmosphere surcharged with fervour and rejoicings which owed

their origin to the mysterious and amazing behaviour of Thakur. In such an atmosphere once rendered more inspiring by the festive occasion of the birth-day of *SriKrishna*, many devotees gathered in the sacred place. It was agreed that the festival should be pompously celebrated by the performance of the *pujah* of *Yoga-Maya* and the arrangement of a feast. Among the disciples there were many Vaishnavas who made it a point to discharge the vow of fasting. Thakur, however, referred to certain injunctions of the scriptures which convinced them of the superiority of worship over fasting.

Now commenced the *pujah* of *Yoga-Maya* before an image at the sight of which Thakur said giggling, "Oh ! Mad One, I shall cut off Thy tongue and hold in My grasp the garland of heads Thou sustainest." Again, the image became enlivened and animated with life, assumed a sitting posture on the lap of the Yogacharya and indulged in a loud laughter, bent on sports and plays. This was not all. The advent of midnight was followed by the appearance, in the holy place, of *Shankari* and *Shankar* (*Durga* and *Shiva*). The sense of surprise, which visited the assembled *bhaktas* amidst so thrilling scenes, was augmented, when they were blessed with an inspiring sight of Thakur being surrounded by a large number of Gods. They blew *dunduvi* (a sort of large kettle-drum) and performed exquisite dances. The whole atmosphere was perfumed with the sweet scent of flowers. Thus was observed the holy birth-day festival of *SriKrishna* to the infinite surprise and admiration of the watching devotees.

"Happy the home where God is there,
And love fills every breast ;

Where one their wish, and one their prayer,
And one their heavenly rest."

Now, while Thakur was residing most probably at Ampuliapara *Ashram*, there lived in the town a very noble Vaishnava known as *Galabhanga Siddheswar Babaji*. He was regarded as a holy man of God-realization. He had unwavering faith in his creed, no doubt ; but he was far above the spirit of sectarianism. He was devotedly attached to the performance of *kirttana*. The songs, that he would sing with fervour early in the morning while circumambulating the holy town, would prove quite inspiring to the people. It was perhaps his unflinching devotion to piety that secured him the love and grace of Thakur. Indeed, He would often pay His visits to his *Ashram* to attend to his *kirttana*. The devout soul would welcome Him with reverent enthusiasm, seat Him cordially on a chair and entertain Him with songs sung in a state of inspiration. Once, however, the noble Vaishnava renounced his earthly frame by the evening. Srimat Keshabananda joined the funeral procession and bent his steps to the cremation ground and witnessed the obsequies. But Thakur had been accidentally absent from the *Ashram* at that time. He had gone to the Station Master's quarters and been too late in retracing His steps to the holy abode at Ampuliapara. After His return Srimat Keshabananda communicated to Him the sad news of the demise of the noble Vaishnava and also of the termination of the funeral ceremonies. Then did Thakur make His way at dead of night along with Srimat Keshabananda to the crematorium beside the *Ganga*. There He wanted His disciple to point out the spot where the body of the *Babaji* had been burnt.

Then, with a gesture from Thakur the *bhakta* brought from the *Ganga* as much of the holy water as he could hold or carry in the hollow made by joining his hands together. Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva sprinkled it thrice on the ashes of the funeral pile, when lo ! there appeared on the very spot the previously-mentioned Siddheswar *Babaji mahashaya* ; but his body was covered all over with a piece of cloth. However, Thakur exhorted him to go to the heaven of *Sri Krishna*. Srimat Keshabananda was astonished beyond measure to see that the noble Vaishnava began at once to ascend the upper region. The devotee kept gazing on the soaring body till it passed out of sight. Thereupon Thakur went back to the *Ashram* along with the *bhakta*.

XIII

VISIT TO KATWA AND AFTER

“Lofty beyond all thought,
unperishing,
Thou treasure-house
 supreme, all-immanent ;
Eternal Dharma’s
 Changeless Guardian, Thou ;
As immemorial Man
 I think of Thee.” (18)

Gita, Eleventh Discourse.

Sj. Kalidas Bandyopadhyaya had entered into a matrimonial alliance with a *Brahmana* family at Katwa (Dt. Burdwan). He earnestly implored Thakur to deign to visit his father-in-law's residence in the town. In answer to the entreaty Thakur travelled forth to the place. Now, here there is a spot which derived its claim to reverence at the hands of pilgrims from its past association with *Madhai* and hence is distinguished now by the name of "*Madhai's house*". When Thakur was approached with a prayer for paying His visit to the shrine, He appeared to be overpowered with pious horror, and said with trepidation in the manner of a boy, "Oh ! No ! I won't go. He (*Madhai*) will beat Me !" Still the devotees took Him there. But scarcely had He drawn near to the place, when He shuddered and took to heels and ran on till He went back to the place whence He had started.

However, as the night closed in, the devotees began to sing a stirring song in praise of God. This excited so high, overwhelming emotions in Thakur's heart that He could not resist an ecstatic dance. Now, the *bhaktas* saw that it might occasion His dropping down on the ground with a force that was sure to harm His limbs. And so some of them employed themselves in protecting His body. But Kalidas Babu, who was unusually bulky and strong in person, asked his brethren to take part in the musical performance and set himself the task of defending the wonderful Dancer against any injury which He was likely to be exposed to. But all His efforts for guarding the holy body were frustrated, inasmuch as He received a terrible shock like that of electricity each time he brought his hands in contact with it (Thakur's body).

Repeated shocks rendered the stalwart figure quite helpless and baffled his scheme ; nay he had his body so suffused with perspiration that he was constrained to pass to his repose to rest his tired limbs ; and these did not regain their lost strength and vigour and soundness till he was fanned for two hours or so by two servants.

This event was followed by Thakur's return to Nabadwip, where Sj. Kalidas once sought an interview with Him at an unusual hour. Then did he fervently implore Him to grant the devotee such grace as would enable him (Kalidas Babu) to gain sight of his *Ishta Devata* (Favourite and Chosen Deity) even without the observance of the usual practices. The ardour and eagerness with which the prayer was made for an abnormally long time elicited from Him (Thakur) the gracious reply that his desire would be fulfilled. But a cloud of doubt captured his (Sj. Kalidasa's) better feelings ; it dimmed his power of reasoning and the light of his experiences of the infinite grace of the Lord towards His adherents. And hence quite oblivious for the time being of the miraculous efficacy and influence of the causeless mercy of the *Guru*, the *bhakta* could not bring himself to believe that it would be possible for him to achieve the supreme end without the adoption of the means, since every event owes its occurrence to a cause. But no sooner had he thought thus than he was filled with an indefinable sense of marvel, as he observed a corner of Thakur's apartment illuminated with a light ; indeed, it defied in brilliance the rays of thousands of suns shining simultaneously. And in the midst of the light there appeared his *Ishta Devata*, the Divine Mother *Durga*. This miracle subjected

to him overpowering emotions and he stood with exceedingly delighted wonder before the sight.

Now, Thakur would, during His residence in the holy place, at times repair to Calcutta and the suburbs and bless His devotees with His auspicious visits. Thus did He once go forth to Sarsuna (Off Behala) and take up His abode, of course, temporarily in the residence of a devotee in *Falguna* (February), 1304 B.S. (1898). It was at such a time that Mukunda Babu, a disciple of the *Guru*, sought an interview with Him along with his wife for the fulfilment of her long-cherished desire for being initiated by the Yogacharya. On the achievement of his purpose he sought to resume his return journey to his lodge at 6, Radhanath Mallick lane, Calcutta, when Thakur quite unexpectedly got into the car, hired by him, evidently with the object of going forth to the city. But everybody was at a loss to gauge the mystery of His behaviour on this occasion too. However, the car rattled on. And scarcely had it reached the vicinity of the Kidderpore market, when Thakur was found suddenly passing into ecstasy with the usual signs of divine emotions being manifested. But what arrested the admiring gaze of Mukunda Babu was the unusual bulk of His holy body developed under the influence of the ecstatic state in which He was, to all appearance, lost. Hence His head was about to reach up to the roof of the car. Indeed, sometimes He burst into tears and sometimes into a fit of laughter and sometimes uttered a few words in indistinct accents.

However, the car reached the desired destination. And the news of Thakur's arrival at Sj. Mukundalal's residence

flew from mouth to mouth till it attracted an immense confluence of *bhakta*s to the holy *abode*. They made it a point to decorate exquisitely the majestic but lovely form of the *Guru* with wreaths of flowers, leaves and other articles. They feasted their eyes on the augmented charms of the extraordinarily radiant person. Now, Thakur wanted a devotee to sing a song in praise of God. The music commenced at 8 P. M., and continued with unabated fervour and zeal for a pretty long time. It dissolved Thakur into ecstasies, inasmuch as tears flowed forth in abundance and in an uninterrupted current and moistened His rosy cheeks and breast. By and by He was absorbed in *samadhi* and passed six hours or so in that condition. And it was after 2 O' clock that He came to His senses and recommended rest to the assembled *bhakta*s. Hence they retreated with many a bow of deep humility to the revered feet. And after partaking with great delight, of the holy *prosada*, they passed to their repose.

Scarcely had the lingering remnants of the night been scared away by the gleam of the very early dawn, when Sj. Satis Babu (a doctor), the younger brother of Srimat Swami Saradananda of Belur Math, and a disciple of Thakur (who had all along taken part in the *kirttana* there) repaired to the residence of Sj. Mukunda. And then did he call on the latter with unusual ardour evidently with the object of making a very important communication. When he met his beloved friend, the doctor conveyed to him the amazing intelligence that the previous night Thakur had graced the *Kankurgachhi yogodyan* with His holy presence on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva ; nay He had condescended to partake

of the feast that had been spread before Him with respectful ceremony, listened to the *kirttana* and held discourses on religious matters. Then He was requested to pass the remnants of the night there. But as He had expressed His desire for repairing to a house at 6, Radhanath Mallik Lane, Calcutta, Srimat Swami Saradananda and others had felt prevailed upon not to seek to detain Him against His will. However, they had rendered their help to Him in crossing the Railway in accordance with His proposal. Satis Babu had received this information from his elder brother and could not resist the impulse to communicate it to his friends. However, the joyful but mysterious intimation, delivered by the doctor with an air of profound solemnity, filled Srimat Keshabananda and Mukunda Babu with an indescribable sense of marvel, inasmuch as they failed to account for the wonderful event. Indeed, since His arrival at *bhakta* Mukunda's residence in an ecstatic state by the evening Thakur had never left the house, nay had remained for hours absorbed in *samadhi* and then had gone to His repose in the early hours of the morning ; still He had not left His bed. How was it then possible for Him to have visited the *Yogodyana* ? Besides, Srimat Swami Saradananda was not a man to fabricate lies with a view to deceive others.

However, an unquenchable thirst for having the puzzle solved by Thakur laid hold on Srimat Swami Keshabananda. And hence he was not in a position to resist the temptation to approach Thakur in an attitude of deep humility with the fervent prayer that the *Yogacharya* would deign to expound the mystery to him. Thakur first sought to explain the matter away with an evasive

reply. But when He found all his efforts for dissuading Srimat Keshabananda from the course of action baffled, He was compelled to remark, "Everything is possible of achievement by the will of God". Indeed, God's ways are mysterious. Now, after passing a number of days thus in the midst of His devotees in Calcutta and the suburbs, Thakur went back to Nabadwip.

Thakur's return to the holy place was hailed with great rejoicings by the *bhaktas* whose pang of separation was now allayed by the balm of reunion with their Object of supreme devotion and love. This meeting was followed by an expression of the overwhelming feelings of joy and love—feelings that manifested themselves in manifold ways both from the *Guru* and the disciples. These latter commenced to sing stirring songs in praise of God. Thakur passed into ecstasy and when, after a while, He regained His consciousness, He pronounced "*Narayan, Narayan*" and asked the *bhaktas* to go to rest.

Thakur's arrival at Nabadwip was followed by the celebration of "*Sri Sri Gurupurnima tithi*." It was magnificently solemnised by the performance of a round of grand festivities that continued with unabated zeal for three consecutive days. The day preceding the festive occasion was occupied with a *kirttana* that was sung to the accompaniment of not only the usual musical instruments but also fourteen *madals* (a sort of drum, a tambour). The very atmosphere of the town was kept reverberating, when the *bhaktas* passed through its streets in a gay procession singing all the while at the full extent of their lungs soul-stirring songs. Indeed, it was a performance in which the tones of the singers vied in melody with the

sounds of the musical instruments ; these served to produce tuneful series of notes that proved quite enchanting to the listening ears. And, as a result, an immense concourse of the people of the locality felt impelled to join the animated, vast procession. This served to augment, in the highest degree, the effects of the choral symphonies. At times the cries "Glory to *Guru Jnanananda*" rent the sky. To the devotees of *Sri Sri Gururanga Deva* it appeared as if the Lord had again made His appearance in the holy place to inspire them with stirring *kirtanas*. However, after circumabulating Nabadwip, the singers retraced their steps to Ampuliapara where Thakur was then residing. When the *Guru* realized that the *bhaktas* had assembled before the door of His apartment, He unbolted it and appeared before them in a state of ecstasy. And it was not long ere He became absorbed in *samadhi*. Of the devotees some sang round about Him and some sank at the holy feet with deep devotion.

Verily, the early dawn of the holy day, that followed, was hailed by the *bhaktas* with raptures. They were animated with an irresistible desire for contributing effectively to the magnificent celebration of the festival ; they went forth to the *Ganga* to wash themselves in the holy waters. In the mean time Thakur had taken the seat appointed for His use. And some of the devotees employed themselves in the act of decorating, with wreaths of flowers, leaves and sandal-paste and several articles of dress, a form in which superhuman beauty was contending with divine lustre. Indeed, when He sat thus adorned with the choicest articles, He presented the most attractive look on which the devotees feasted their eyes with delighted wonder. Now it was the time for them to place their offerings of flowers and other ingredients at the holy feet. While some remained occupied with this function, others imposed upon themselves the task of making preparations for a grand feast ; it consisted of a variety of delicacies and other articles of food dressed in several modes. However, when the feast was spread before Thakur, He declined to accept anything else except a quantity of milk and asked the *bhaktas* to partake of it. Now, when the devotees were sumptuously fed, they assembled round about the Yogacharya and began to sing *kirttana*. They remained so much absorbed in the music that they were not aware when the night had passed away to make room for the light of dawn.

Then, as the sun rose above the horizon, the devotees set themselves the task of making arrangements for another feast which was in no way inferior to the foregoing one.

Thakur took an active part in the preparation. He had an intention to entertain the people of Nabadwip on a very extensive scale. As there was dearth neither of rice nor of curry nor of delicacies and sweets, the guests were perfectly satisfied with the *prosada* that was distributed among them in a very large quantity. The termination of the feast was a signal for the *bhaktas* to sing songs in praise of God. Thus was the festival celebrated with unusual pomp and splendour by the devotees who had assembled in abundance on the eve of the auspicious day from various quarters of the locality and outside.

"The practice of the *Name* has turned obscure men
into luminaries of the world.
It was for the glorification of the *Name* that the
world was made.
Think, O think of the Lord as the cause of all causes !
The *Name* has brought all forms into being.
Himself the Formless One lives in the utterance
of the *Name*.
When by His grace He imparts this understanding
to a man,
He learns to practise the *Name* through the *Guru*."

Verily, we have previously made statements about the accession of emotions that would overpower Thakur when He would listen to *kirttana*; hence it is not at all difficult to infer that the very pronouncement of the Name of 'Hari' in His presence would inspire in His heart such feelings as would find expression through a ceaseless flow of tears from both the eyes. But an event more amazing than this occurred one day as a *kirttana* on the Name and infinite glory of Goddess *Kali* was intoned by

the *bhaktas*. Thakur was all attention to the song and then became absorbed in deep contemplation on *Shiva*. This was followed by copious salivation. And the room, in which He was seated, had its atmosphere surcharged with the smell of wine. It goes without saying that the *bhaktas* were overwhelmed with wonder. However, Srimat Keshabananda held in his joined palms the saliva that flowed along the two sides of His (Thakur's) mouth. It was accepted with the utmost veneration by the devotees as the holy *prosada*. Many of them partook of the same with deep regard. This act of devotion was followed by the inspiration of inexpressible delight in their hearts, and a feeling of intoxication which did not relax its hold upon them for a pretty long time.

It has already been noted that Thakur's causeless mercy often dropped upon even those who were condemned by the society as the vicious and the fallen ; and this paved the way for their purification and redemption. This is borne out by the following event :

There was a man named Nalin who, for some reason or other, was sentenced to imprisonment. It was during the period of his incarceration that he fell a victim to a severe attack of desentery which threatened him with the loss of his life. Thus oppressed with a terrible danger, the distressed soul wept bitterly with a violently agitated mind ; just at that time Thakur, the Purifier of the fallen, the Friend of the helpless, suddenly revealed Himself before Him in the jail and gave him a definite assurance that he would certainly be cured. And it wasazing, indeed, that he was delivered both from the clutch of the fell disease and the state of bondage in no time. Thakur

subsequently remarked, "However addicted to vice and profligacy Nalin may be, he shed tears pronouncing the Name of '*Hari*'; and this secured him deliverance from the misery and distress which had preyed upon him".

"He brings my wandering spirit back
When I forsake His ways,
And leads me for His mercy's sake,
In paths of truth and grace."

Then, on one occasion Thakur was seated in the midst of the assembled *bhaktas* and said in the course of a conversation, "As I have become easily available, therefore, few can realize Me. But if they had to reach Me after undertaking an abnormally long journey and crossing over a great many mountains on climbing them up with great difficulty by means of a very long chain, they could have some idea of Me. Again, when I shall renounce this body, they will be able to know Me." At this Sj. Satis Sen said, "My Lord, please do not make such a relentless declaration. Deign to show us the mercy that may lead to the termination of our career along with Yours. How shall we pass our days, if You disappear for good from our midst?" So saying the devotee burst into a passion of sorrow. However, Thakur quieted his agitation of mind with the remark that much time was sure to elapse before He would take eternal leave of them.

Now, the farewell scene, that followed the termination of the entertainments and celebrations of the previously-mentioned *Guru-purnima-tithi* festival, was a heart-rending one. The devotees, whose attachment for the *Guru* admitted of comparison with nothing in this transient world, felt extremely distressed at heart, when the time

for their separation from Thakur drew near. They burst into tears, as they sought to bid Him farewell with low reverences. The sight of the intense sorrow, that preyed upon the *bhaktas* on the eve of their departure from Nabadwip, moved the tender-hearted Thakur to tears; and He said to them with faltering words, "Don't sorrow. I shall soon meet you in Calcutta. Prepare the Math at Monoharpur for My residence."

XIV

THAKUR MET THE DEVOTEES OF CALCUTTA AT MONOHARPUR

"If a man meditates on the *Name*, he will not go
the round of births,
He will be immune from the torture of Death,
And will shed off all mortality.
His enemies will keep away from him
And he will be safe from all harm.
His mind will be always on the alert,
And will not be affected by fear,
Or troubled by pain.
This meditation is learnt in the company of the *Holy*.
All riches in abundance for him who is God-
intoxicated!"

After a time Thakur went forth to the Monoharpur Math (now known as the Mahanirvan Math) at Kalighat.

This time He passed a great many days here. The tidings of His arrival at Monoharpur were in no time circulated among the devotees ; and they presented themselves to the holy place to pay their respects to the *Guru*. This gathering of *bhaktas* paved the way for the performance of *kirttana*. Thakur would scarcely leave the precincts of the Math ; He would often remain occupied with the composition of books, regardless of the needs of the body. Again, He would sometimes remain so much absorbed in listening to the *kirttanas* that He would be quite dissociated from the things of the external world.

Then came the holy *Basanti Ashtami*, a day of great rejoicings to the devotees of Thakur, inasmuch as it was on this day that their Object of supreme devotion and love, the revered *Guru*, appeared on the surface of the Earth. The early dawn found the *bhaktas* occupied with various operations so necessary for a successful termination of the round of functions in connection with the festival. The Math was astir with the blended noise of conch-shells, gongs, *mridanga* (a sort of drum shaped like a yellow myrobalan), cymbals, bells and other instruments sounded together, when the light-offering ceremony was performed. There arose cries of "Glory to *Guru Jnanananda*", which rent the sky. This function was followed by an inspiring music that knew no termination till the morning rose in unclouded splendour. And ere the sun was much above the horizon, the *bhaktas* imposed upon themselves the high task of anointing and then washing the the holy body of Thakur with a large quantity of milk and water. Then they furnished the same with a splendid

raiment and beautiful floral wreaths and leaves shaped in various modes. Thus decked and smeared with sandal-paste, Thakur took His seat. This was a signal for the *bhaktas* to place their offerings of flowers and other articles with deep regard at the hallowed feet. While these rites were being performed, a number of *bhaktas* sang stirring songs in praise of God—songs which contributed effectively to the creation of an atmosphere of righteousness and fervour. Thakur, however, passed all the time in a state of ecstasy. To-day He practised unbounded generosity and liberality, inasmuch as He granted whatever prayer the devotees approached Him with. Hence He appeared to them to be the *Kalpa tree* (the tree that grants anything that is desired of it). Indeed, many of the *bhaktas* were blessed with the sight of the forms of their *Ishta Devatas* manifested from His body. Hence they dabbled in supreme joy. Again, there was no dearth of sweets, delicacies and other articles of food which are sorely needed in preparing a grand feast. It was spread with respectful ceremony before Thakur who partook of it. And the *prosada* was distributed among the assembled devotees, who were sumptuously fed on the occasion. In short, the festival was a grand success.

While Thakur was residing at the Monoharpur Math, an invitation to repair to the *Kankurgachhi-Yogodyan* on the occasion of the birth-day festival of *Sri Krishna* was cordially extended to Him. Accordingly He set out at about 1 P.M., on the appointed day for the holy place in a carriage in company with a few devotees. The dress, that He wore, was a simple one consisting of a piece of clothe

dyed with red ochre, a coarse bed-sheet (which served the purpose of a *chaddar*, that is a loose piece of cloth worn as an upper garment), and a pair of slippers. Thus attired, He got into the car, pronouncing again and again the Name of *Nayan*. In the way He passed the time in addressing discourses to the accompanying *bhaktas*, uttering the Name of God and observing the sky and the beauty of natural objects ; this last act effected His absorption in *samadhi*.

The carriage reached the destination at about 3 P.M. Thakur alighted from it along with the *bhaktas*, one of whom carried His slippers, since He had to make His way along a miry path. He was welcomed with every token of respect and reverence in the *Yogodyan*. And as soon as Thakur appeared there the assembled visitors bowed low to Him with deep devotion. Some of the *bhaktas* employed themselves ardently in washing the holy feet so as to remove the clay that had stained them. Then He stepped forth to the room in which the body of devotee Sj. Ramchandra Dutta lies buried. Now, Sj. Giris Ghosh, Srimat Swami Saradananda, sister Nivedita and some other *bhaktas*, who were seated there, stood up at once to extend to Thakur a hearty wel-come with respectful ceremony. However, His entrance into the apartment was followed by His absorption in *samadhi* ; and the devotees sought to protect Him against dropping down on the floor. He regained His consciousness for a short while, which He availed Himself of in sitting down. Again was He lost in deep contemplation. Sj. Giris Ghosh now took this occasion to explain to sister Nivedita the state in which Thakur was placed. He further said, "Both He (Thakur) and Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva would sit beside Each Other in this state and address

to Each Other discourses in a language allied to Sanskrit, which was quite unintelligible to us." At this Sister Nivedita took her seat in front of Thakur and began to fan Him. However, after a while He came to Himself and Sj. Giris Ghosh availed himself of the opportunity to introduce her to Thakur as the daughter (a disciple) of Srimat Swami Vivekananda ; he also prayed Him to condescend to bless her. At this the Yogacharya blessed her by raising His right arm with the remark that she had a good heart and a noble disposition. Sister Nivedita received the blessing quite reverently with joined hands.

Thakur then directed His steps towards the *nat-mandir* in front of Sri Sri Paramahansa Deva's holy burial and passed into ecstasy on reaching the spot. Meanwhile *kirttana* was performed by bands of singers. This paved the way for His absorption in deeper contemplation. Indeed, divine emotions manifested themselves in and through various gestures and postures on the part of the Yogacharya. Sometimes His eyes stood quite motionless and sometimes sent forth tears in abundance. Again, He raised His arms and held them straight up in that posture. But after a while they seemed to be borne down by the pressure of some invisible force and fell to His sides. This mysterious behaviour of Thakur filled the observing *bhaktas* with marvel. However, much time passed till He regained, to some extent, His consciousness. This was a signal for the accompanying devotees to lead Him slowly to the carriage. With their help He got into it and could not reach the Manoharpur Math before night.

Indeed, Thakur highly complimented the efficacy of *kirttana* in bringing speedily about the concentration of

mind. He strongly recommended it as one of the most fruitful and potent religious disciplines and practices. Sri Sri Mahaprabhu Gouranga Deva too was an uncompromising Advocate of *kirttana* and a great Upholder of its glory. This is why He (*Mahaprabhu*) inspired dread in the mind of the *Kazi* by assuming the form of *Nrisingha* (Man-lion), when the latter thwarted the performance of *kirttana* and thus sinned against Him. Thakur, too, chastised a gentleman of Kalighat, when he sought to hinder it (the performance of *kirttana*). This gentleman was the resident of a house adjoining to the dispensary of devotee Sj. Jajneswar Babu, a medical practitioner at Kalighat. Many *bhaktas* of Thakur assembled in the dispensary and sang in concert songs on the Names (and celebrating the glory) of God. Scarcely had they performed *kirttanas* on two or three consecutive days, when the gentleman was highly incensed at their behaviour. So, he took them to task quite incivilly; nay he gruffly warned them against the repetition of the act, which he ruthlessly condemned as a source of annoyance to him. He also threatened to beat out a severe punishment upon them, in case they paid no heed to his warning. The *bhaktas* felt much worried on this account. And finding no other means, they brought the matter to the notice of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. On hearing this Thakur seemed to grow bitter to and vehement against the gentleman for his offence against *kirttana*. Indeed, He said with awful solemnity, "*Kirttana* should be performed throughout the whole of this night." The devotees made all arrangements necessary for carrying out His order. Then did the *kirttana* commence. Thakur joined it. He

held His arms upwards in an ecstatic mood and uttered a loud cry of defiance. He often shouted, "Truce to your fears" and thus gave the *bhaktas* assurance of safety and cheered up their spirits. Now, 'the cries of defiance' served to rend, as it were, the heart of the offender. It seemed to him as if crores of lions had been roaring simultaneously. The tremendous roar oppressed him with terror and almost robbed him of his consciousness. The gentleman subsequently disclosed the fact to the *bhaktas*. However, the bitter experience he had of the evils of interrupting the religious practice, served thenceforward to prevail upon him to mend his ways.

He could get release from this desire by obtaining the wealth of the *Name*.

The various enjoyments of the world will not allay
his thirst;

It could be appeased by drinking the nectar of
the *Name*.

In the Valley of Death which man has to traverse alone,
The *Name* will be with him to comfort him.

Such a *Name*, O my soul ! should be ever remembered.

When heard from the lips of the *Guru* it leads to the highest destin

Then the importunities of His devoted adherents, Sj. Satischandra Ghosh and Satischandra Sen, made it necessary for Thakur to pay His visits to Amlagunra and Maynapur in the districts of Midnapur and Bankura respectively. In

both the places the devotees entertained Him with their devoted services and *kirtanas*. But during His stay at the house of Sj. Satischandra Ghosh at Amlagunra the *bhakta* accommodated Him very carefully ; nay he served Him by a strict observance of the rules of purity in the attitude in which a devout soul worships '*Narayana*' . This is why he did not allow anybody else to invite Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva even to pay His visit to his or her house. Now, there lived in the village an old lady who developed deep, loving devotion towards Thakur. And so she felt strongly inclined to entertain Him once with some delicacies. But she had not the courage to disclose her heart-felt desire to Sj. Satischandra, whose very attitude struck a chill, as it were, into her inmost heart ; hence was she compelled to try to stifle it. But nothing could extinguish the fire of supreme devotion which was blazing on the altar of her soul. The Omniscient Thakur, however, knew what lay hid in the inmost recess of her heart. He could not remain untouched by her passionate entreaties and appeals which found vent through her gestures and looks. He was moved to pity and did not like to prolong the agony of her suspense. Infact, He felt impelled to grant without delay her cherished desire. And so He devised a means of achieving her noble object ; He made it a point to pay her a visit under the pretext of going out to answer the call of nature. Indeed, once He set His foot in her house all of a sudden, when she was not at all prepared for His reception nor kept a look-out for His arrival. This mysterious fulfilment of her wish moved her to tears. Really she was beside herself with joy. She was distracted with excited energy to entertain Him to her heart's content with the choicest

articles of food. Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva cordially accepted what she laid before Him, with overwhelming reverence, for His refreshment.

It behoves us to mention here that while Thakur was staying at the house of devotee Sj. Satishchandra Ghosh, the news of His arrival and residence there must have, it goes without saying, flown from mouth to mouth. And it was not long ere it was conveyed to Sj. Haragobinda Sukul of Garbeta. He was a noble soul, whose exterior was but the film which covered his devoted, unflinching attachment for righteousness and the stainless purity of his inmost heart. But these found vent through the illuminating, sacred songs which he composed evidently in a state of inspiration. However, from what he had heard of Thakur's greatness it was not difficult for a pure-souled man like him to realize on how lofty a height Thakur stood above them. It is this realization that paved the way for his meeting with Him. The courtesy, that he offered Him with all the passionate devotion of a truly righteous man and out of true heart, reminded our beloved spiritual brother, an inhabitant of the same village, Sj. Ramkrishna Chakrabarty, of the great-souled Roy Ramananda's meeting with *Mahaprabhu SriKrishnachaitanya Deva*. Indeed, Sj. Sukul felt intensely interested in and greatly rejoiced at hearing, with rapt attention, the inspired and inspiring discourses on religious subjects delivered by Thakur.

Now, there is in the aforesaid village of Amlagunrhā a forest of highly useful timber-trees (called *shala*). Once Thakur was roaming about in the same, when His eyes fell upon some *Dona*-trees. The leaves of these trees look like cups. This is why they are called by that name.

Trees like them are to be found in Sri Brindaban, too. So, the sight thereof reminded Him of the sacred place and plunged Him in ecstasy. By chance some Santal women were then passing by that way with pails of milk. The sight of the divine lustre of His extremely lovely countenance subjected them to over-powering devotion and inclined them to worship Him and offer Him a quantity of milk. But in the absence of a pot, in which they might present it, they were compelled to serve it up in a leaf of a *Dona*-tree. Thakur blessed the offer with His cordial acceptance, as since He knew their heart and highly appreciated their sentiments. However, after gratifying the desires of various devotees in the previously-mentioned villages, SriSriNityagopal evidently Deva went back to the Mahanirvan Math at Kalighat in Calcutta.

After a time Thakur set out for Bajrapur in the district of Jessore (Bengal) and alighted at the Sibnibash station, where two *bhaktas*, known as Beni Babu and Upen Babu, had been standing ready with a carriage for receiving the *Guru Deva*. Now, the two gentlemen made careful searches for the Object of their supreme devotion, when two feet suffused with the crimson and beauty of red lotuses attracted their gaze. And on looking up they found One, in whom they recognized the lustrous features of the Yogacharya whose glances were, without delay, cast upon theirs. And so He called on the devotees and proposed an immediate departure from the station to avoid the gaze of the passengers, who, attracted by the extraordinary loveliness and majesty of His countenance, kept their eyes riveted on Him. Now did the *bhaktas* make it a point to take their seat on the coach-box, leaving

Thakur alone inside the carriage ; since, if they were seated beside or in front of Him, their feet might come into touch with the holy feet of the *Guru Deva*—which was construed as a great sin. Thakur realised the situation. But owing to His infinite love for His disciples, He did not allow them to carry their scheme into practice, saying, "You are My children. When parents caress their infant sons, the feet of the latter often come in contact with the breast of the former. Again, the parents often place them (the sons) on their heads. Is there anything criminal in these operations ?" However, the carriage ran on till it stopped before the house of Beni Babu And devotees,in abundance made their appearance there and extended to Thakur the most cordial welcome with a profound obeisance. After a while He was bent upon visiting the different parts of the village. Thus did He repair to each house. But although He had never come into touch with the inmates thereof nor had He been advised of their names, still He called on them separately by pronouncing their individual names and enquired of them how they were faring. While thus blessing the people of the village, He arrived at Delghat where He finished His ablution. Next did He retrace His steps to Beni Babu's residence. The devotees now imposed upon themselves the high task of entertaining the Lord with various articles of food capable of being dedicated to the Supreme. The holy *prasada* was distributed among the assembled *bhaktas* who partook of it with the utmost veneration. Enticed by the charms of His extremely beautiful and luminous form, many would come to attend to His edifying discourses on religious subjects and observe His mysterious behaviour during the perfor-

mance of *kirttanas*. These sank so deep into their hearts that they could not stifle an inner urge to take refuge under the sheltering wings of His causeless, supreme mercy.

The blessed people of Bajrapur would adorn the person of Thakur with sweet-scented flowers, garlands, sandal-paste etc., worship Him with various articles and solemnly perform the light-offering ceremonies before Him in due time. In short, they would not approach Him with other thoughts than such as devout souls bring to the shrine of the Supreme. One day they had Him decked with floral wreaths, wristlets, anklets and some articles of dress. Then they decorated His head with a coronet and face with *alaka* and *tilaka* (peculiar pointed marks on the forehead and cheeks and paint on the forehead or the bridge of the nose). This operation was immediately followed by his absorption in *samadhi*. And He played on a branch of a papaw tree in the ecstatic state so skilfully that it excelled the tunes produced by a flute. The devotees stood charmed with His beauty and wonderful behaviour.

On another occasion the *bhaktas* approached Thakur reverently with the prayer that they might be permitted to perform *kirttana* to the accompaniment of fourteen *madals*. The prayer was readily granted. And so a day was fixed for the purpose. Since the dawn of the appointed day the devotees adopted means whereby a grand feast might be held. On the eve of the performance of the songs, the singers partook of the holy *prosada* in accordance with the instruction of Thakur ; and with His permission (given in a state of ecstasy) they took their departure from the spot with various musical instruments. Overwhelmed with emotions, they went on singing stirring songs till they

circumambulated the whole village and retraced their steps to the place whence they had started. They paid their respects to the *Guru Deva* and commenced their *kirttana* with unusual fervour and devotion. As soon as Thakur attended to the songs, high feelings of divine love were excited in His heart, nay gained turbulence. And He could not resist the impulse to spring to His feet and jump into the assemblage of the singers and commence a violent dance. This state of things underwent no change till a long time elapsed. Now did Thakur begin to dance with unsteady steps keeping time to the *kirttana*. In this state He held some by the hand and threw His arms round the neck of others. These operations owed their origin to the divine emotions that the *kirttana* had inspired in Him. After a while the *kirttana* ceased, no doubt ; but Thakur still stood stiffened in deep contemplation. Then, when He came to Himself, He partook of the feast that was most devoutly spread before Him ; and the devotees were not long afterwards entertained with the holy *prosada*. This event was followed by a series of feasts and *kirttanas*. Thakur graced them all with His kind participation.

"The *Name* of God to His lover is the way of life and
the emancipation of the soul.

It is his meat and drink.

It crowns his vision of beauty and love.

It smooths down all the creases of life.

With it the man of God feels exalted,

And glorified in the sight of man.

In the *Name* he finds the joys of flesh and of mind ;

And he never feels lonely,

As he is absorbed in the service of the *Name*

And is rapt in the splendour of God in His sanctuary."

There is, in the village of Bajrapur, a reservoir of water known as Bangore. The devotees arranged for a great feast to be held in honour of Thakur under the shade of the second banyan tree standing on the opposite side of Bangore. The Yogacharya was taken there with every mark of honour and supreme reverence. The articles of food procured on the occasion were regarded as sufficient for entertaining a hundred heads only. In the meantime the bhaktas threw their whole-hearted enthusiasm into and dedicated the full measure of their devotion to the performance of a soul-stirring *kirttana*. Attracted most probably by the enchanting songs, an abnormally large number of people assembled there. The devotees, who had organized the festival, started at the sight of so immense a concourse of spectators ; indeed, an overpowering anxiety as to how they would feast such an august assembly, violently agitated their minds. At this Thakur wanted to be fed first. So, a quantity of the good cheer was offered Him with due regard. Thakur took His meal and even before washing His hands and mouth asked the *bhaktas* to request the visitors to take their seats. Now, scarcely had He given the direction, when He became deeply engrossed in *samadhi*. However, the devotees carried out His order. And they stood amazed to see that although they had fed the guests sumptuously, there remained enough surplus food.

While Thakur was staying at Bajrapur, Sj. Biswambhar Babu, the Zemindar of the village, had somehow or other an inkling into His greatness and ascendancy. Hence did he feel prevailed upon to invite Him, with every mark of civility and cordiality, to condescend to grace his house

with His holy presence. Thakur was graciously pleased to accept the invitation. The devout Zemindar welcomed Him to his house with reverent enthusiasm and ready gratitude. He entertained Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva with various delicacies. Indeed, rich articles of food dressed in several modes were dedicated to Thakur with deep devotion in plates and pots made of gold. He partook of them cordially. Thus was Sj. Biswambhar's desire fulfilled.

On another occasion a cordial invitation was extended to Him by Sj. Bepin Dey of Jayadia, who prayed Him most fervently to deign to grace his house, too, with His holy presence. The Yogacharya made it a point to grant his prayer. He, however, told none but one or two of the devotees of the day on which He had made up His mind to start for the place. But once very early in the morning He set out for Jayadia with a bundle held in His armpit. The devotees, who had been informed of it, hurriedly secured the services of a carter named Panchu, who transported Thakur in his cart. The Yogacharya reached the destination. He was, no doubt, received there with every demonstration of overwhelming honour and reverence. His arrival here was followed by a succession of high festivals not unblessed with inspiring *kirtanas* performed with eclat and zeal. Now, the juice yielded by the date trees in the village is very delicious and as such is drunk by the people with great relish. This inclined the devotees to entertain their Lord one evening with the dainty product of the winter. So, they collected in an earthen jar a quantity of juice, that exuded from a date tree freshly incised after two or

three days' respite ; they did so, since this kind of juice is a more welcome drink. By chance the jar was placed beside a kindred vessel containing water stained with the scales of fish which had been washed in it. Now, among the *bhaktas* there was one named SriHari Babu. He could not resist the inclination to entertain Thakur first of all with the delicacy. But under the influence of the ardour, which had laid hold on him, he could not distinguish the right jar from the wrong one. And so he filled a glass with the obnoxious, filthy contents of the latter ; and then did he make an offering of the same with the utmost veneration to his Object of supreme love and reverence. Aware of the inmost sentiments and the sincerity of the purpose of the noble soul, Thakur drank the substance quite cheerfully and handed over the glass with a small quantity of the dirty matter to the assembled devotees. Ah ! sore was the disappointment of the *bhaktas*, when, on partaking of the prosada, they realized what a great offence had been committed ! So, their faces became inflamed with passion. And they darted at SriHari Babu impatient looks of fierce resentment for the evil produced by his hasty and injudicious conduct. But the gracious Lord quieted the fury of the devotees by admiring the noble spirit of the *bhakta*, who had evidently done the deed in ignorance. He also proclaimed that He had enjoyed the drink very much. However, the devotees prayed Him most fervently to accept the juice they had secured for His entertainment. So, He had to grant their prayer and thus do the needful for pacifying their agitated feelings.

However, after passing a week or so at Jayadia,

Thakur went back to Bajrapur. His return there was followed by a festival held at His advice under a large *gab-tree* standing in the field where the *pujah* (worship) of Goddess *Chandi* is performed. The feast was accompanied with *kirtana* and terminated with the distribution of *prosada* among the *bhaktas*. Next, He went forth to Jagannathpur at the earnest entreaty of the devotees thereof. He deigned to pass a day or two in the residence of each devotee and retraced His steps to Bajrapur.

Then was it settled that Thakur should grace the village of Sadhuhati (Magura) with His auspicious visit. So, a few carts were hired. One of them accommodated Thakur and the remaining ones were occupied by the *bhaktas*. The carts moved on towards the desired destination, when the foremost one, in which Thakur had been placed, stopped all of a sudden. The bullocks attached to the same seemed to be startled and frightened. And the efforts made by the carter for inducing them to pull on were of no avail. Wonder-struck, the *bhaktas* alighted in hot haste to ascertain the cause. Then did they see a sight which produced in them a thrill of astonishment. They found, to their utter surprise, that a tree in front of the cart was bowing low and rising up at regular intervals; it looked like a distressed soul fervently praying for relief from extreme suffering. They were at a loss to account for its mysterious behaviour. So, they humbly brought the matter to the kind notice of Thakur, saying, "How is it that the tree is being violently shaken, although there rages neither a storm nor blows a strong wind to disturb it?" On hearing this

Thakur said with a smile, "Some noble soul is living in this tree ; he is craving for liberation." Then did the *bhaktas* earnestly pray to Thakur for fulfilling his (the noble soul's) desire. He readily granted their prayer by exhorting him to go to his desired destination. Indeed, the exhortation was followed by wonderful and happy consequences : the tree stood still and a sound resembling the one caused by the flight of a very large bird was heard. Hence did the *bhaktas* realize that some soul left the tree and flew on towards an unknown region.

However, Thakur resumed His journey. Now, when the lingering remnants of the night were about to pass way to make room for early dawn, the noble Mussalman, the carter, pronounced the Name of *Allah* with deep devotion. This dissolved Thakur into ecstasies ; and divine lustre, which radiated from His lovely, majestic form, illuminated all sides around Him. Tears streamed forth from His eyes. The noble Panchu turned back and was at once affected by the wonderful sight which stirred him to the depth of his being. And he felt prevailed upon to clasp the holy feet by stopping the cart. He burst into tears in that condition. Now, Thakur alighted from the vehicle after a while and seated Himself down under a peepul tree standing in the field (not far from Sadhuhati). But this could not impede the zeal and resolution of the devout Shek, who again threw himself at the hallowed feet of Thakur and shed tears. He (Thakur) now took compassion upon the noble soul and stretched His gracious hands to him. Thus could the carter find shelter in the mercy of the *Guru*. This event was followed by His (Thakur's) arrival at Sadhuhati, where many took refuge.

in His grace. Then did He go back to Nabadwip along with the accompanying devotees.

“Eternal Light ! eternal Light !
 How pure the soul must be,
 When, placed within Thy searching sight,
 It shrinks not, but with calm delight
 Can live and look on Thee !”

XV

BACK TO NABADWIP

“They who take refuge with Me, O Partha, though of the womb of sin, woman, Vaishyas, even Sudras, they also tread the highest path. (32)

How much rather then holy Brahmanas and devoted royal saints ; having obtained this transient joyless world worship thou Me. (33)

On Me fix thy mind ; be devoted to Me ; sacrifice to Me ; prostrate thyself before Me ; harmonised thus in the Self, thou shalt come unto Me, having Me as thy supreme goal.” (34)

Gita, NINTH DISCOURSE.

Some time passed after His return to Nabadwip, when one night one Sj. Aswini Kumar Basu was ushered into the apartment in which Thakur was seated on a chair and the devotees on a bedstead. But none of the

figures except the One in the chair attracted his eyes. Indeed, his imagination was at once captured by the exquisitely symmetrical and luminous form, lovely expression of the countenance and gracious looks of the Yogacharya. These also extorted from him a profound obeisance from a distance. This operation was followed by his attainment of an accommodation in the assembly of the devotees. The glances of mercy not unmixed with love Thakur cast upon him, gave him a sense of security ; nay these served to remove all fear from his mind and prevail upon him to regard the *Guru* as his nearest and dearest one. Then there was an exchange of words between the new-comer and Thakur ; this terminated in a proposal from the Latter for a song to be sung by the former. Dr. Sj. Deven Mukherjee hailed it as a token of mercy shown by the Lord to the stranger. And so he asked Aswini Babu to perform a song. Sreejut Basu sang one indicative of the resignation of a devoted self to the Object of supreme devotion. Thakur listened to it and by and by passed into ecstasy. Sj. Aswini Kumar was overwhelmed with delighted wonder at what he had neither seen nor dreamt of before. The same feeling divine, as had violently shaken Thakur's frame, now reduced it to the stillness of a statue with occasional intertwining of the fingers of both the hands into the modes of giving both a boon and an assurance of security (*barabhaya-mudra*). Sreejut Basu was constrained by these unwonted circumstances to cease his song. But to guard against the interruptions this was sure to cause to Thakur's raptures occasioned by the song, Dr. Sj. Mukherjee advised him to go on. Sj. Aswini Kumar

recommenced the song. Thakur became much more deeply engrossed in *samadhi*. But as an inordinately long time had been spent since the evening, it was held expedient to put a stop to the music. It goes without saying that the extraordinary beauty of the Yogacharya coupled with His mysterious behaviour left an abiding impression on Sj. Aswini's mind. After a while Thakur came to Himself. He then admired the song sung by Aswini Babu and observed that he was possessed of devotion ; but it required to be a little refined (evidently for reaching a full-fledged development). This remark was addressed to Sj. Deven Mukherjee, who prayed Thakur to deign to do what would lead to the development of his (Sj. Aswini's) attitude of devotion. At this the Yogacharya cast His gracious eyes on Sreejut Basu with a smile. These exerted an elevating and inspiring influence on and proved quite attractive to him. And after a short time he united himself in the bond of discipleship with the holy feet of the *Guru*.

It behoves us to note here that one night some *bhaktas* of Nabadwip realized, to their infinite surprise, the truth that even devotees, living far removed from Thakur, enjoyed as much of His vigilant care and affection as the residents of the *Ashram*. On this night a *kirttana* on Goddess *Durga* was performed. This dissolved Thakur into ecstasies and tears. After a while the normal state of mind was restored to Him ; then did He lay Himself down. And devotee Daivi Babu addressed himself to the task of reverently serving His hallowed feet, when He said to the devotee, "Why dost thou weep ?" Daivi Babu said, "No, Father, I am not at all weeping !" But all on a sudden

Thakur burst into tears with a scream and said, "Then why have tears fallen on two of the toes of My right foot?" Then an anxious query from Sj. Satis Sen and the other devotees met with the reply, "Some *bhakta* of Calcutta has fallen in danger and is fervently appealing to Me!" At this Satis Babu said, "Has the distressed soul crossed over the danger?" Thakur said, "Yes." However, the previously-mentioned toes of Thakur grew very cold then.

Now, most probably during His career at Nabadwip "SriRamkrishnakathamrita" by (the previously-mentioned) Sj. Mahendra Babu, the distinguished *bhakta* of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa Deva, arrested the attention of Thakur. Evidently a critical study thereof brought to His notice some passages therein. Thakur saw, to His infinite surprise, that in those paragraphs the facts of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva's dealings with Him had been misrepresented, nay unceremoniously falsified and ruthlessly distorted. At this Thakur sounded a note of warning ; He advised His disciple, the previously-mentioned Kalidas Babu, to strictly forbid Sj. Mahendra Babu, in and through a letter, to publish in that way false and imaginary accounts about Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva's attitude and treatment towards Him. And perhaps when Mahendra Babu paid no heed to His solemn warning, He was compelled to write a short criticism of the previously-mentioned passages. But He did not disclose this to His disciples. However, while the *bhaktas* were publishing, in a now-defunct Bengali magazine entitled "*Sri Sri Nitya Dhama*," the writings left by Thakur, they happened to come across that criticism ; they then inserted the same

in pages 90-92 of the *Jyaistha-Asharha* issue of the journal printed about twenty nine years back in B. S: 1326. For more reasons than one we feel it incumbent upon us to insert here an English rendering thereof :—

"Paramahamsacharya* Nityagopal Swami has never been under the necessity of being instructed by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Mahasaya. So, it should be said that Paramahamsacharya Nityagopal Swami has never been instructed by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Mahasaya.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Mahasaya would call Paramahamsacharya Nityagopal Swami an 'Ever-Perfect, Great Man'. According to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Mahasaya, Paramahamsacharya Nityagopal Swami has never been in need of observing any practices. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Mahasaya would call Paramahamsacharya Nityagopal Swami 'Hamsa'. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Mahasaya would call Paramahamsacharya Nityagopal Swami 'Paramahamsa'; Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Mahasaya would call Paramahamsacharya Nityagopal Swami 'Abadhuta'. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Mahasaya called Paramahamsacharya Nityagopal Swami 'Nityananda' at the house of Shib Chandra Bhattacharya of Shyampukur in Calcutta.

Once upon a time when Paramahamsacharya Nityagopal Swami came back from SriBrindaban, Balaram Babu, who was sprung from the Basu family or Basu-race,

*Evidently the title 'Paramahamsacharya' was inherited by Thakur from His revered Guru Deva, the Paramahamsacharya Sri. Srimat Abadhuta Brahmananda Deva. Sri Sri Nitya Deva is also represented as the Samanvayacharya. But the devotees very usually call Him the Yogacharya.

and others took Him along with them and went to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Mahasaya of Dakshineswar. Ramkrishna Paramahamsa Mahasaya made a low obeisance to Paramahamsacharya Nityagopal Swami by falling prostrate (like a stick) in the presence of a great many men and women and danced in joy and with fervour with raised arms. This is why I say that it can never be possible that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Mahasaya ever addressed to Paramahamsacharya Nityagopal Swami any words of admonition or chastisement. Paramahamsacharya Nityagopal Swami never feels the necessity for being instructed by any body. So, it is quite obvious that He has not been instructed by Ramakrishna.....

At one time Ramakrishna Paramahamsa declared Nityagopal Swami as 'Chaitanya' at the house of Balaram Basu Mahasaya of Baghbazar. Has Mahendra Babu forgotten that ? It was never possible for Ramkrishna to say by His own mouth to Nityagopal Swami, whom He called by the wonderful Names of 'Chaitanya' and others, "O, you righteous man, take care ! Thou mayest go once or so ; never go so often—Thou mayest fall down. Indeed, woman and gold constitute *maya* ; a righteous man should needs keep himself at a great distance from woman. All sink there ;" since Ramakrishna was not a foolish man. Mahendra Babu has not played the part of a sensible (intelligent) man in comparing, in his soliloquy, with *Chhota* (younger) Haridas Him, whom Mahendra Babu's Guru, Ramakrishna, called by the Name of 'Chaitanya'. Indeed, this has pointed to the perversion of his (Sj. M.'s) intelligence (or intellect) ! Indeed, this has pointed to his boyishness ! Indeed, this

has pointed to his insanity ! Mahendra Babu is given to write many pleasant but false stories owing to the derangement of his brain ! We have not even the slightest faith in the (unreal) stories produced from his imagination. Stories like these there are many in this world. Can he (Sj. Mahendra Babu) deny (or is it not a fact) that "M." (Sj. Mahendra Babu) himself once *sought to augment (or enhance) the importance or greatness of Narendra (Srimat Swami Vivekananda) by minimising that of Ramakrishna ?* The Bangabasi said many things against that. So, we need not dilate on that matter in this connection. We have a good mind to say many things about Ramakrishna, when necessary. We have a good mind to criticise carefully (or well) 'Ramakrishnakathamrita,' when necessary."

After the above criticism had been published in the previously-mentioned magazine, Babu Harendranath Dutta, an old clerk in the Bangabasi office, and an intimate friend of Mahendra Babu, brought the same to the notice of Sj. 'M.' This served to make him (Sj. Mahendra Babu) realize the wrong he had done. And he felt exposed, out-faced, and ashamed of his deliberate distortion of facts. Then he said sentimentally affected, "Ah ! it is a pity that even 'Kathamrita' has been subjected to criticism ! Be that as it may, I shall erase in the next edition of the book all the references about Nitya Babu. What shall I do ? I had to write all those things only with a view to the up-keep of the interest of our Sampradaya (Ramkrishna Mission). Many have objected even to my having written, "Nitya, Thou hast come and I too. Who will realize the truth about

this ?" Now, are you quite sure that the criticism in question was written by Nitya Babu Himself ?" At that Haren Babu said, "If you don't believe, please, go to Kalighat-Calcutta Mahanirvan Math and read the manuscript yourself." To this Mahendra Babu said, "Yes, I shall go there once." But so far as we know he never went to the Math to look through the manuscript.

We feel impelled to bring, in this connection, to the notice of the reader the fact that Thakur has given, in His writings, all Truly righteous men of His time (including Sannyasins of the eminence and standing of Srimat Trailing Swami, Srimat Visuddhananda Swami and Srimat Vaskarananda Swami) their due. He has highly complimented the greatness of Sri Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa Deva by representing Him, as already stated, as the 'Great Man of Dakshineswar'. He has also said about Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva, "To see Paramahamsa Mahasaya is to see *Sachchidananda* (the Supreme Being, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Eternal).....The day, on which a man will realize Paramahamsa Deva, he will realize Sachchidananda, no doubt." He also highly appreciated the greatness of Srimat Swami Vivekananda by bursting into tears on hearing of the termination of his glorious earthly career most devoutly dedicated to the service of his revered Guru Deva.

Indeed, Thakur was a great upholder of truth. This is well-attested by His strong protests against the false charges quite ruthlessly levelled against the well-known Srimat Krishnananda Swami of Kasi (Benares). This is well-attested also by His snubbing to Srimat Satyananda Swami of the same holy place and criticism of Sreejut

Mahendra Babu's disparaging remarks about Him and by many other things as well. Indeed, a strong Divine Character, although He lords it over all passions, desires, sentiments, tendencies and so on, is often given to play the part of wielding violently the weapon of holy and just anger in His defence of a right and noble cause and denunciation of a wrong one. *

" Such was the case with *Bhagawan Srikrishna*, *Bhagwan Sri Srikrishnachaitanya* (Gouranga) Deva and so on. Such was the case also with *Bhagawan Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva* and Lord Jesus Christ ; this will be clear from the following lines :

Sri "Sri Ramkrishna Deva said, ".....Rani Rashmani .. asked me to sing a song or two. On this occasion, while I was singing, I noticed she was sorting the flowers for worship absent-mindedly. At once I slapped her on the cheeks"

(THE GOSPEL OF SRIRAMKRISHNA, Page 43).

....."He (Jesus Christ) looked round on them (the Scribes, Pharisees and Herodians whose malignant gaze was fixed on Christ to see what He would do, that they might accuse Him.....P. 154) with anger ; a holy indignation burned in His heart, glowed on His countenance, animated His gesture, rang in His voice, as slowly He swept each hard upturned face with the glance that upbraided them for their malignity and meanness, for their ignorance and pride.... (P. 155).....and Jesus came out to the multitude with His whole spirit still aglow with the just and mighty indignation by which it had been pervaded. Instantly—addressing primarily His own disciples, but through them the listening thousands—He broke out with a solemn warning, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is *hypocrisy*."

.....(P. 164).....He told them (the Pharisees and Sadducees), ".....Hypocrites ! ye know how to discern the face of the sky : can ye not learn the signs of the time ?" (P. 169)words of burning anger He sometimes spoke—words of scathing indignation words of searching irony—words of playful humour ; but some are startled to find Him using words of sheer contempt.

Now, the spirit of sectarianism (and communalism) was looked upon by Thakur, who was the very antithesis thereof, as a great evil. It would give Him much pain. He sought to eradicate it root and branch in and through His writings, nay in and through the teachings He would deliver. We feel inclined to insert here an English rendering of some of His pronouncements with respect to the subject thus : "My object is not to organize a *sampradaya* (sect). If I were inclined to build an organization, I could enlist or gather a very large number of disciples. The people of all religious sects, in whatever way they may observe practices, will, when they (the practices) will reach the climax, reach the same Ruler of the Universe. I am sympathetically disposed to every *sampradaya*.....Those, who desire to reach Me, will come to Me, even if I reside in a cave.....I have not come to organize a party...The spirit of sectarianism (and communalism) is very bad. It prevails upon a man to condemn some doctrine or other, some sect or other or some great man or other.....I am not a Vaishnava (or I shall not be recognized or I can not represent Myself as a Vaishnava), since, in that case, I shall have to bear the sectarian paint on the forehead and assume the garb of a Vaishnava mendicant. If I say that I belong to the

Yet why not ? There can be no noble soul which is wholly destitute of scorn. The "scorn of scorn" must exist side by side with the "love of love." Like anger, like the power of moral indignation, scorn has its due place as a righteous function in the economy of human emotions, and as long as there are things of which we rightly judge as contemptible, so long must contempt remain. "P. 200.

(THE LIFE OF CHRIST BY D. FARRAR)

Vaishnava-sect, the Vaishnavas will not accept Me. I have got beard, no doubt ; but I have not been initiated (or converted) into Mahomedanism after the observance of the rites requisite under the guidance of a Kazi or a Moulavi. If I orally represent Myself as a Moslem, the Moslems will not welcome Me. Again, if I declare Myself as a Christian, the Christians will not accept Me, since I have not been baptized. I am not given to externally count over the beads of a rosary (or utter a prayer or the Name of a Deity), practise austerity, worship and adore a Deity outwardly. I am also not inclined to have a *mantra* (mystic formula) muttered into My ear by a family *Guru*. For this reason the ordinary Hindus or the Hindus in general will call Me an atheist. They are of opinion that it is the duty of a (theist or a) believer in God to pray to or worship God and utter His Name outwardly. Now, no organization (party) or sect will accept Me ; I also do not want one. An organization (party) or a sect develops in a pit or a pool or a muddy (miry) fetid, or a small pond ; it does not grow in a clear pond or a flowing (running) river. Then, what am I or how can I represent Myself ? I beg (or am a beggar at the door) of every sect or organization or party. All doors are open to a beggar. The righteous men of all sects and communities give me the alms of love and devotion. I receive alms from every sect. So, Mine is an undividable (or indivisible or composite organization or) sect composed of all the sects (or organizations). The Saktas, the Saivas, the Ganapatas (worshippers of *Ganesh*), the Vaishnavas, the Christians, the Mussalmans and so on—the people belonging to all castes, creeds, nationalities and sects—

give Me alms. I do not belong to any particular sect. As My *Ishta* assumes manifold forms, so do I belong to many (or various) sects. When My *Ishta* assumes the form of *Shiva*, I am a Shaiva ; when He (or She) assumes the form of *Vishnu*, I am a Vaishnava ; when He (or She) assumes the form of the Presiding Deity of any other sect, I, too, belong to that sect.....I am a Hindu, a Mahomedan, a Christian.....I am a Cosmopolitan. A man, who has reached real (divine) wisdom, has no sect of his own ; but all sects are his." A critical estimate of Thakur's works conveys to an earnest reader a definite idea about the evils of sectarianism and communalism. Indeed, those, who had the blessed privilege of close association with Him, have been able to realize these.

In fact, Thakur incarnated Himself for sounding the doctrine of the Universal Religion. He assigned, in His numerous works, to the *Sruti*, the *Smriti*, the *Puranas*, the *Tantras* and the *Vedanta*, nay the views of several sects and communities, a due place in the doctrine He preached. Scarcey did the Samanvayacharya^{*} Jnanananda Deva suffer, in His edifying discourses on various subjects, 'the letter of the scriptures to dominate over the spirit.' This is why as, on the one hand, *Brahmanas* belonging to the highest status of the society, scholars of high attainments and achievements and men of unimpeachable character basked in the sunshine of His causeless mercy, so did many of a very mean lineage, of questionable character and of ill-developed intellect and discernment,

*The Acharya or Preceptor, who has achieved the harmonization or reconciliation of the view-points of several sects and communities and faiths, is called the Samanvayacharya.

too, on the other. Two incidents, we are going to narrate below, bear a glowing testimony to this :

(i) Once Thakur was seated in the Nabadwip *Ashram* surrounded by His devotees, when there appeared one Sj. Mathura Bag. He was born of a low family ; but Thakur was graciously pleased to accord him the favour and privilege of living in the light of His divine personality. The *bhakta* was remarkably frank-hearted and straightforward in his dealings and utterances. This is why he approached Thakur straight without observing even the simplest rules of courtesy and said to Him quite unhesitatingly, "How is it that You have ceased to reveal Yourself to me ? Why don't You appear before me any more there ?" The Omniscient Thakur knew and highly appreciated the innermost thoughts and sentiments of the simple-minded, artless devotee ; but perhaps He pretended ignorance thereof with a view to hide, as was His wont, His true Self or to see how far he could carry his heart upon his sleeve ; and so did He ask him, "What do you say ? Where do I not appear before you ?" At this Sj. Mathura Bag replied, "Well ! You told me to mutter, in front of a *Tulasi* plant, the *mantram* (the mystic formulas) You gave me. I would repeat the same and You would appear before me ; why don't I see you there any longer ?" The conversation took the assembled *bhaktas* by surprise. They marvelled to hear it. Be that as it may, Thakur said, "Do you still quarrel with your wife ?" The artless devotee made a clean breast of his heart and said, "O ! Is this the reason why You have become invisible to me ? Well ! I assure You, I won't quarrel with her any more. Will You henceforward reveal Yourself to me ?" Thakur

said with a smile, "Yes." After his departure Thakur said with emotion, "Aha ! he is just like the *Nishada* (of a degraded caste) chief, *Guha*, who was a friend of *SriRamachandra* !"

(ii) There was another disciple of Thakur, who, too, belonged to a somewhat low caste. He was a (gardener or) florist by caste and profession and known as Khoka Mali. He was prompted by an inner urge to regard it as his only religious duty to deck the splendid form of Thakur tastefully and exquisitely with several articles of dress and in various ways. On every festival day he would decorate His body magnificently with flowers, garlands and ornaments made of *shola* (a pithy plant ; also the Indian cork). Indeed, the decoration would be well-suited to the occasion and prove extremely captivating to the devout eyes of the *bhaktas*. Perhaps none else could deck the form so pompously even with very costly garments and ornaments. When, on hearing *kirtanas*, this unlettered florist would pass into ecstasy, tears would roll down his eyes incessantly. Thakur, too, overwhelmed with divine emotions, would hug him (in that state) in arms and be absorbed in *samadhi*. Ah ! what an inspiring and charming spectacle they would then present ! The ground below would be moistened with the holy stream of tears of ecstasy flowing from the eyes of both Thakur and the *bhakta* !

Once, on the full moon night of *Karttika* (October-November), the festive occasion of *SriKrishna's* circular dance, when the holy town of Nabadwip was flooded and thrilled with the silvery light of the autumnal moon, Khoka Mali decorated the majestic and exquisitely

beautiful body of Thakur with the charming articles of dress that would adorn the enchanting form of *SriKrishna* during His career at Brindaban. Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was dissolved into ecstasies and plunged in the emotions and sentiments of *SriKrishna*. And so He stood in His (*SriKrishna's*) peculiar posture, with bends at the head, waist, and the leg. It was at this time that Khoka Mali marked, to his sore disappointment and utter mortification, the absence of the flute he had omitted to bring from home. Finding no other means of supplying the want, he snatched a branch of a papaw tree and cut it into the shape of a flute and placed it in the hands of Thakur. He (Thakur) began to play on the same and flourished a very sweet and enchanting tune unheard-of before. This proved extremely exhilarating and inspiring to listening ears, nay produced in them thrills of glad but great surprise and bursts of uncontrollable admiration and filled an extensive area with raptures. The tune even caught the ear of devotee Kalidas Babu when he was at a great distance from the Ampuliapara *Ashram* at Poramatala and thrilled him with joy. The peculiar, enchanting melody readily enabled him to realize that it could be produced by nothing else but the flute of 'Nitya-Krishna', his Eternal Friend, Thakur. So, he could not resist the impulse to pay a visit to the *Ashram*. Ah ! what a fascinating sight he witnessed there with great wonder ! He found Thakur standing in the peculiar posture of *SriKrishna* and the devotees around Him over-powered with and immersed in the emotions of the cowherdesses of Brindaban (that is, the ecstatic emotions of sweet-hearts). Now, for a devotee of the calibre and

eminence of Kalidas Babu, who had attained, in a remarkable degree, the grace of Thakur, it was not impossible to be blessed with such a sight. But what is worthy of note is the spectacle that arrested the wondering gaze of the people of the village of Sorsona off Behala (a suburb of Calcutta) on the night of the previously-mentioned *Holi* festival celebrated there by the devotees of Thakur. The villagers marvelled to see from the road that a number of women had been dancing round about Thakur. The fact is that the (men) devotees, overwhelmed with the emotions of the cowherdesses of Brindaban, danced, with the graceful bending and movement of their limbs, like them (the cowherdesses) and so they presented the look of dancing girls.

Indeed, "All the religions are but the different paths to the same goal, the different means of reaching and realizing the Supreme" embodies the very essence of the doctrine preached by Thakur. He recognized, as already indicated, the claims of all the religious disciplines and practices ordained by the scriptures. He enjoined the active, zealous and devout performance in the *Ashram* of *kirtanas* on the Names (and glories) of all Gods and Goddesses ; these would prove equally inspiring to Him and plunge Him in *samadhi*. The *Abadhuta Ashram* fostered the nurture and growth not only of *Tulasi* plants but also of a *Manasa* tree. Sweets (i.e. cakes made of sugar or molasses boiled and blown) would be dedicated to "*Hari*" below the *Tulasi* plants along with the performance of *kirtanas* on His (*Hari's*) Name ; the hoiy sweets would then be scattered and distributed among the singing devotees. This practice, although devoutly observed by all the Hindus usually of

Bengal, is welcome, as it were, specially to the Vaishnavas of this province. Again, in the same *Ashram* he-goats would occasionally be sacrificed at the foot of the *Manasa* tree. This custom prevails among the Shaktas merely ; but it is quite repugnant, nay shocking to the sentiments of the Vaishnavas. So, one day some devout and learned Vaishnavas approached Thakur and said, "We are at a loss to realize what creed (or principles of righteousness) You follow ; we see that You are given to perform *kirtanas* (evidently on "Hari") and dedicate sweets to "Hari" under the *Tulasi* plants on the one hand, and ordain the sacrifice of he-goats at the foot of the *Manasa* tree on the other ! What is this ?" At this Thakur replied, "I have enjoined the strict observance of these practices for the welfare and enlightenment of the people. I have removed the barrier between the longish drum (called *khola* beaten to the accompaniment of *kirtanas*) and the large one (called *dhol* or *dhak* beaten (also) at the time of the sacrifice of goats) and achieved a happy harmony of the two. Indeed, the offering of sweets to "Hari" below a *Tulasi* plant is as holy a practice as the sacrifice of he-goats beneath a *Manasa* tree. Both of them have been prescribed by the scriptures and hence are worthy of deep reverence and devout observance. The one should not be in conflict with the other."

However, once *kirtanas* were being sung in concert in the holy presence of Thakur in an atmosphere intense with religious fervour. Various *bhaktas* were observing, with great wonder and delight, Thakur in various postures and attitudes, when a strange sight arrested the admiring gaze of Srimat Keshabananda. The

devotee saw that the splendid form of Thakur was rising up and coming down again and again. There also appeared in His body a form of *Gopala*. It radiated a divine splendour that brilliantly illuminated the whole room. The sight inspired overwhelming fervour in the *bhakta*. And so he could not resist the impulse to fling himself with overpowering reverence at the holy feet of Thakur. He laid his head on the lotus feet and bathed them with tears of ecstasy. Now, after a time the *kirttana* drew to a close and the other devotees regained their normal states of mind. But that was not the case with Srimat Keshabananda. He still remained prostrate there under the irresistible influence of ecstatic, supreme devotion. On that occasion Thakur remarked, "If one earnestly desires to reach and realize God, one should weep like 'Churho'.**"

Reference has already been made to the fact that Thakur said, "The holy birth-place of *Mahaprabhu Sri Gouranga Deva* is now in the bed of the *Ganga* and neither on this side nor on that." In course of time it silted up into a shoal and was called by the name of '*Ramachandra purer charha*' (the shoal of Ramachandrapur). It was overgrown with a group of acacia trees. However, towards the close of Thakur's career at Nabadwip Srimat Keshabananda and some other *bhaktas* made it a point to pay, in the holy company of Thakur, a visit to Mayapur, the sacred birth-place of *Mahaprabhu Sri Gouranga Deva*.

* That is the shortened form of 'Churhamani', a title, which, as already stated, was obtained by the *bhakta* in Kasi before his attainment of Thakur's grace. Thakur would call him by that pet name.

He fulfilled their desire and started towards that place. But scarcely had He reached, in the course of the journey, a spot adorned with acacia trees, when He became absorbed in *samadhi*. At this the devotees were taken by surprise and cast wondering glances at Him. They failed to account for this mysterious behaviour of Thakur. However, when He came down from the plane of super-consciousness to the normal mood, they said, "Please, let us resume our journey. It is getting late. Mayapur is situated on the opposite bank of the river. And we shall have to go some distance." But Thakur pointed to the spot, where He had been immersed in *samadhi*, with the remark, "No, here is the sacred place and nowhere else." This amazing and enlightening intimation dissipated their wrong impression and struck them dumb. Indeed, they had been quite in the dark about the growth of the previously-mentioned shoal. In this mysterious way did Thakur discover and ascertain the birth-place of *Mahaprabhu*. Since that time His *bhaktas* have been paying their visits to it with deep reverence.

Now, once in the afternoon Thakur paid a visit to the office of the Station Master of the Nabadwip Steamer Station along with some disciples, among whom mention may be made of Sjs. Kali Banerjee and Satish Ghosh. The Station Master welcomed this as a token of the *Guru's* causeless mercy to him, and with His permission he devoted himself to the preparation of *khichuri* (an article of food composed of rice and pulse, seasoned with salt, spices etc.) for the entertainment of the *Yogacharya* and the assembled *bhaktas* at night. In the meantime Sj. Satish Ghosh began, with a gesture from Thakur, songs on

the glory and supremacy first of *Guru* and then of *Shiva*. But as soon as some point in the song was reached Thakur, who had already been overwhelmed with high emotions, stood up under the influence of ecstasy. Divine lustre radiated from His body, the colour of which, too, underwent change. His cheeks and breasts were over-flooded with tears which, having descended in a continuous flow on the ground, created a current. The sight of such a stream of tears rolling down the eyes of Thakur filled the observers with marvel. Is it possible for a human being to shed tears so copiously ? After a while He regained, to some extent, His consciousness ; and in a state of ecstasy He was about to grant boons to His *bhaktas*, when Sj. Kali Banerji said, "Thakur, we are averse to prayers, the performance of devotional duties and the observance of practices requisite in reaching liberation. Oh ! what will become of us ?" With this the devotee embraced the holy feet. Then Thakur gave him security with the reply, "Whoever will see Me this time shall reach emancipation." This pronouncement was immediately followed by His absorption in *samadhi*. Indeed, a pretty long time passed before He came to His senses. Then He stepped forth to and seated Himself on the bank of the *Ganga* along with the devotees ; here did He address to them discourses on various topics in a jovial mood for some time. Next did He retrace His steps to the residence of the Station Master, Sj. Kali Sarkar. The *bhaktas* seated Thakur in the centre and took their position around Him with the object of partaking of the board that was spread before them. The termination of the feast was a signal for them to direct their steps to

the *Ashram*. It should, however, be mentioned in this connection that, at the end of *kirtanas* performed in His presence, Thakur was given to grant the devotees whatever boons they would pray Him for.

On another occasion Dr. Deven Mukerjee began to sing songs after the evening in praise of God along with the other devotees in the house (now known as *Abadhuta Ashram* but then called *kirtana barhi* or the house for the performance of *kirtanas*) assigned to their use, when Thakur made His appearance there. This served to augment the ardour of the *bhaktas*, who now devoted themselves to the work with redoubled energy and fervour. Then commenced the ecstatic dance of the Yogacharya. Some of the devotees now stood around Him to protect Him against dropping down on the floor by the pressure of ecstasies. The *kirtana* continued with unabated zeal for a very long time. And Thakur remained in a state of absorption in *samadhi*. Sometimes He appeared to be a little aware of the happenings of the external world. And it was at such a time that He muttered to Himself in broken sentences something the devotees failed to grasp. All the while, however, several *bhaktas* sang several songs on *Kali*, *Durga*, *Shiva*, *Ram*, *Krishna* and other Deities. Then, all on a sudden Thakur raised His left hand to heaven with extended eyes and kept His gaze riveted on the upper region in the left. After taking up this posture, He made a pronouncement in a shrill voice, though indistinctly. The devotees, agape with astonishment, expressed with their eyes their deep sense of admiration. Thakur seemed to say in a state of intoxication, "Let me have wine," although He was given to totally abstain from

drinking wine. No sooner did He say so than a flow of froth streamed forth along the two sides of His mouth; and the atmosphere inside the room was at once surcharged with the odour of wine. Some tasted the substance, which appeared, in no way, to differ from wine. Those, who took it in a large quantity, became intoxicated with the same. All were taken by surprise at this unforeseen and unprecedented state of things. This night was remarkable both for the performance of *kirtanas*, which knew no cessation till 4 A.M., and the unexpected mercy shown by Thakur.

We have already referred to the fact that Thakur not only preached the essential unity of all creeds and standpoints by discarding sectarianism and communalism in all their aspects but also set a living ideal of non-sectarianism by His behaviour. The following incidents, among other events of His glorious career, will bear a glowing testimony to this :

(i) Once a teacher of a school at Nabadwip named Yadu Babu approached Thakur with a copy of the Bible in his hand. The Yogacharya expressed a desire for

having a glance at the same. And so the teacher was about to hand over the holy book to Him. But as soon as He (Thakur) stretched His hands for receiving it His heart was stirred to the depth and the usual signs of ecstasy manifested themselves. Two things, however, attracted the admiring gaze of the assembly—(a) His whole body seemed to be suffused with crimson and (b) His motionless eyes covered with a film which usually appears on those of a corpse. Hence did the observers infer that Thakur had become engrossed in the consciousness of His oneness with Jesus.

(ii) Again, bent upon celebrating the holy *Ram-Nabami* (the birth-day of *Sri Ramachandra*), the devotees, who were engaged in performing *kirttana*, were desired by Thakur to sing songs on the Name of *Sri Ramachandra*. The performance inspired in Him the familiar emotions, which found expression in various ways. But great was the astonishment of the *bhaktas*, when they found that the usual hue of His body was usurped by the green colour of a new blade of the bent grass (which is the colour of the form of *Sri Rama*). An event so miraculous and mysterious struck the disciples of Thakur mute.

Often would Thakur behave with the graceful simplicity of a child before the restoration to Him of the normal state of mind on the termination of His *samadhi* and decline to drink the proffered hot milk saying, "I won't drink milk. I won't drink milk." Sometimes, however, He would accept it with the words, "O Mother, let it be taken by both Thyself and Myself." At such times He needed to be dealt with like a child. This will be clearly indicated by the following account :

One night He was seated to take His supper, when, with the obstinacy of an unreasonable and unconvincible child, He indulged in crying, "Let me have boiled green plantain and rice." Indeed, He was sulkily insistent on the satisfaction of the childish desire. Nothing could intercept His caprice. Now, among the devotees there was one who could fully realize that Thakur had then subjected Himself to the state of a divine child. So, the *bhakta* pretended to be angry with Him and said with a snub, "What a sulky child is this? You naughty, capricious child, do at once take the rice." This snubbing produced the desired effect, inasmuch as He appeared to be frightened by the reproof and set Himself to take His supper. Among other aspects of His conduct, this attitude of Thakur proved extremely attractive to the devotees.

We have already cited instances of how even ill characters would be purged from their sins under the influence of the causeless mercy of Thakur and betake themselves to the path of righteousness. Here we quote another instance to the point. There was a gentleman named Sj. Priya Gopal Banerjee, who was employed as a clerk in the Judge's court at Krishnanagar (Nadia). But he was evidently too addicted to wine, levity and lewdness to cherish virtuous inclinations. Once he appeared at the Nabadwip Steamer Station in a state of dead drunkenness with two bottles of wine in his hands, while Thakur was seated there along with His *bhaktas*. Thakur, the Purifier of the fallen, never despised that licentious man but felt, as was evident, inclined to lead him to the path of virtue. And so He advised a devotee to help him to bathe in the *Ganga* and then conduct him to the *Ampuliapara*

Ashram. In the meantime Thakur reached the Math and initiated the fallen man with mystic, holy formulæ for his redemption. But evil habits once formed cannot be easily shaken off. So, although the elevating influence of the Guru's grace was exerted upon Sj. Priya Gopal, he could not eradicate the evils root and branch—evils which had been preying upon him for a long time. This is why once Sreejut Banerjee made his appearance before Thakur with a bottle of wine in a state of intoxication and said to Him, "Father, do you know me?" The Yogacharya replied, "Yes, I know you." "I am now going forth to the brothel (a particular one)", said the drunkard. Thakur said with a smile, "All right." At this the whore-monger started for his desired destination. But after sometime Thakur, whose anxious thoughts evidently dwelt on Priya Gopal Babu all the while, bade two of His disciples see if he was coming back crying and bring him very carefully. Accordingly the bhaktas took the path to the brothel. Meanwhile Sj. Priya Gopal was coming back with tears in his eyes, sorely disappointed, inasmuch as no sooner did he set one foot into the brothel than he was taken aback at the sight of his mother there. Now did the two devotees, deputed by Thakur to bring Sj. Banerjee, reach him and lead him on to the Math. Priya Gopal Babu now wept more bitterly on seeing the *Guru*. Then the Yogacharya said, "Is your desire fulfilled?" At this the drunkard replied, "Father, why did you not check me, when I was making for the unholy abode?" Then Thakur said, "If I warned you then, would you pay heed to My warning?" However, this event dealt a death's blow to all the evil tendencies and propensities so long cherished by Priya Gopal Babu.

“Pass me not, O God, my Father !
 Sinful though my heart may be ;
 Thou mightst leave me, but the rather
 Let Thy mercy light on me !—
 Even me.”

Then, one night while a *kirttana* was in full swing, Thakur took Dharmadas Babu on the lap and immersed him in the blessed state of super-consciousness. In this state did the *bhakta* realize that Thakur was none else other than the Supreme Lord.

However, mention is being made here of the fact that once Dr. Devendranath Mukhopadhyaya showed a slight disregard for the holy *prosada* of “*Pora Ma*”. This news was carried to the *Yogacharya*, who, highly offended at his conduct, strictly enjoined the devotee not to hold talks about Him nor to come to the door of His *Ashram* nor to take His *prosada*. The communication gave a rude shock to his heart, which had already been greatly afflicted with remorse and repentance with all their vipers. He, however, resolved to abstain from partaking of any article of food till our revered *Guru Deva* should, out of mercy, send for him to take His holy *prosada*. Days passed by in this way. However, on the twelfth day after his resort to fasting, a devotee very tactfully brought about the much-needed re-union of the *bhakta* with the revered *Guru*. When Dr. Mukhopadhyaya was ushered into the holy presence of the *Yogacharya*, He remained absorbed in *samadhi* with the hand lifted up. It was fashioned into a shape technically characterised in the Aryan scriptures as “*abhaya mudra*” (which indicates an assurance of security given to the devotee by the *Guru* or *Ishta Devata*). It was also furni-

shed with a small quantity of rice-*prosada*; the Yogacharya had evidently picked it up from the plate, provided with rice and some other articles of food, that had been placed before Him for His dinner. The doctor was advised by a *bhakta* of the fact that Guru Jnanananda Deva had assumed that attitude to do him mercy. Accordingly he stretched his palm below the holy hand and the rice-*prosada* dropped upon the same. This behaviour was followed by the pronouncement of "*Narayana*" attended with the reopening of the eyes (by the *Guru*) that had remained closed. Tears rolled down them incessantly. Indeed, both the Lord and the *bhakta* appeared to be overwhelmed with emotions, which manifested themselves in a bitter weeping on both parts. When the agony of mind cooled down, Dr. Mukhopadhyaya clasped the holy feet of *Thakur* and asked, with an air of deep humility expressive of solicitations, why he should thus be exposed to such ordeals and tribulations. This enquiry was met with the remarkable reply, "The Lord subjects to trials only such a soul, whose patience never yields even under the most painful and oppressive circumstances. Your behaviour may be likened to that of Indra, the King of the shining Ones of heaven, who, inspite of his consciousness of the supremacy and God-head of *SriKrishna*, put obstacles in His worship; how did the matter terminate? It proclaimed the glory and Lordly powers of *SriKrishna*. You, too, have proclaimed the glory and greatness of the holy *prosada* by being forced by circumstances to slight the same".

"Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love Thee and adore;
Oh, for grace to love Thee more!"

Verily, after the achievement of the much-needed re-union, Dr. Mukhopadhyaya, who bore undeviating devotion towards Thakur, could not resist his heart-felt desire for realising the essential nature of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. So he implored Him earnestly to reveal His True Self to him. At this Thakur directed him to cast his eyes upon Him, when lo ! the doctor marvelled to see five Divine Forms manifested from His holy Body. But the Form of *Gour-Gopala* was to his liking. Now, under the stimulating and quickening influence of the circumstance, the *bhakta* felt inspired to compose and sing a stirring song, which dissolved Thakur into ecstasies.

Infact, the causeless mercy of the Yogacharya to His devotees would manifest itself in manifold aspects. This is borne out also by the following events :

(i) Once He even had a severe type of diabetes, that had preyed upon a devotee, transmitted to His own system for the relief of the distressed *bhakta*. The devotee was an inhabitant of the well-known Uddharanpur and enjoyed a lucrative service in the Judge's Court at Krishnagar. He owed his promotion to the position of the 'Serestadar' (office-master) to the grace of our revered *Guru Deva*.

However, his retirement from the service was followed by an attack of a severe type of diabetes ; it reduced him to a skeleton and deprived him of the strength of his voice and was attended with sores all over his body and inside his throat. This subjected him to great inconvenience even in drinking water. Long treatment of eminent physicians failed to cure the malady. Baffled in all her efforts for removing the evil, his wife threw herself at the feet of our revered *Guru Deva* ; thus did she fervently

implore His mercy, that should relieve her husband of the intense suffering. Her earnest solicitations moved the Yogacharya to tears. So He stepped forth towards the patient and learnt, on enquiry, that he felt inclined to take His *prosada*.

Accordingly, *khichuri* was prepared and offered to the Abadhuta Deva. Then the holy *prosada* was conveyed to the suffering devotee, who, though deplorably inconvenienced in drinking water even, took it slowly with great relish in a very large quantity. Lo! all the complaints died out. He was now perfectly cured, his usual health and vigour being, within a brief while, restored to him. A man, who had been bed-ridden a while before, lay prostrate unaided at the holy feet ; nay he commenced to perform a *kirttana*, in which the other devotees, too, joined. When the song terminated, the Yogacharya enjoined their immediate departure from the *Ashram*. No sooner had the couple left than Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was down with an attack of fever accompanied with shivering. He also could not, to all appearance, resist repeated calls of nature, inasmuch as He left urine a hundred times in the course of an hour. Now, far from expressing sorrow for His personal suffering, He congratulated Nabin Babu on his having reached deliverance from the fell disease. At a sight so appaling, the devotees burst into a passion of sorrow. But the Yogacharya said, "The disease, created by God, found a refuge in Nabin. When it was deprived of that shelter, it is quite in the fitness of things that it should be given one. So it has been allowed an asylum in Me." He was, however, cured under the treatment of the previously-mentioned devotee named Dr. Sj. Jajneswar Dutt.

(ii) Once Nabadwip was terribly oppressed with an earthquake. At this Thakur hurriedly left the bedstead on which He had been seated ; and then putting on His shoes, He took His stand on the verandah floor with one foot stretched in front and the other at the back. This operation was followed by His extended, blood-shot and awe-inspiring eyes being solemnly riveted on the sky. But scarcely had He remained in this posture for a while, when the fury of the earth-quake was quieted. Then did Thakur come back to His seat pronouncing "*Narayan, Narayan.*" However, a devotee asked Him if any of the *bhaktas* had been affected by the evil. At this Thakur made the solemn communication that they had not been even in the least injured. An enquiry into the matter corroborated the proclamation.

(iii) On another occasion the devotees assembled at the Ampuliapara Math and performed *kirtanas* first on the Name of *Hari* and then on that of *Kali*. The former made Thakur appear to the bhaktas to be "*Gouranga-Hari*," and the latter to be the Mother with all the signs of a female form being distinctly manifested. Now, among the devotees there was one named Bireswar Babu, a Muctear by profession, who burst into tears, saying, "Being the people of the Iron Age, we are not endowed with the strength and calibre requisite in reaching liberation by a strict observance of the prescribed practices." At this the Yogacharya clasped his hand with the warmth of the affection of the Mother and replied, "Why do you worry ? I, your Mother, am here to deliver you." This pronouncement was immediately followed by His absorption in *samadhi*, which totally intercepted further speech.

However, such feelings, as stir the heart of a son when he reaches re-union quite unexpectedly with the lost mother after a pretty long time, overpowered the assembled *bhaktas* and found vent through tears shed profusely. The *Guru* quieted their swelling hearts with, "You shall have to observe no practices whatsoever for the achievement of your supreme end. I shoulder the whole responsibility." This pronouncement thrilled them with raptures.

Indeed, the *bhaktas* of the *Yogacharya* would often disclose to Him quite unhesitatingly the secrets regarding their private life for crossing, through His grace, over difficulties that would oppress them. Thus one day a devotee, afflicted with lust, approached Him most humbly with the prayer that the vicious desire might be stifled through His mercy. The *Yogacharya* received the intimation with a smile and the remark, "Would you extirpate the race of devotees?" But the gentleman remained quite silent. However, after a time he fell a victim to a disease, which rendered sexual intercourse with his wife quite injurious to his health. But the long-indulged craving demanded its gratification. So, finding no other means of relief, he surrendered himself to the mercy of Thakur and fervently prayed for the subdual of the passion. The *Yogacharya* attended to his prayer with apparent unconcern. But when the *bhakta* fell asleep at night, he dreamt that Thakur employed Himself in cutting with His own hands his penis. This wonderful event was followed by very happy consequences, inasmuch as thenceforward the devotee's desire for sexual unification with his wife became a thing of the past. And hence he began to approach her

in the attitude of his sister. Oh ! what a miracle can be worked by the grace of the Omnipotent Lord !

"Hast Thou not bid me seek Thy face ?

And shall I seek in vain ?

And can the ear of sovereign grace
Be deaf when I complain ?"

Now, during the earthly career of Thakur the recital of both the *Koran* and the Bible would be performed on the days of the Mahomedan and the Christian festivals respectively. He would extend to both the holy books a cordial welcome and highly appreciate the manifold benefits conferred upon humanity both by *Mahomed* and Jesus. On one occasion (evidently on a Good Friday) He held discourses on the teachings of the Bible and also on the unrelenting severity with which Jesus had been crucified. His heart swelled, as He dwelt upon the cruelty practised on Christ. By and by He appeared to be smitten with so overwhelming grief that He began to tear off His hair even with His own hands. And it was after great efforts made by the bhaktas that the intensity of His grief was allayed.

We have already spoken about Thakur's causeless mercy to His disciples. This will be well-attested by the following statements as well :

In the course of a conversation with Thakur a devotee said, "Father, what course of action should be adopted by us for giving You satisfaction and securing Your good will ?" This question elicited the reply, "You are quite powerless to do the needful for the achievement of the purpose. But rest assured that I am Eever-merciful to and pleased with you."

Once the devotees commenced the performance of *kirtanas* to the accompaniment of several musical instruments. Thakur became intoxicated with the high emotions of divine love. Dissolved into ecstasies, He began to dance in the attitude of *SriKrishna* with the pronunciation, "Bol, bol, (say, say)" in various modes. Sometimes He inclined and swung in the right and sometimes in the left. Again, He placed His foot on the breast of some devotee, embraced another and held the third in His arms ; He placed the fourth in the left and stood in the pose of *SriKrishna* with bends at the head, waist and legs and raised the fingers of the right hand to his lips in the fashion, in which *SriKrishna* would play the flute, and pronounced in a sweet tone, "Glory to *Radha*, glory to *Radha*." His body was affected with horripilation and suffused with perspiration. Tears flowing all the while copiously moistened the ground. The bright golden hue of His form was usurped at intervals by dark, white and vermillion colours and so on. He seemed to cast His glances to and fro with the object of seeking out some beloved object. Sometimes He rushed in a particular direction and sometimes dropped down unconscious on the floor. Again, He grew shorter and taller in stature : His hands and feet were about to penetrate into His Body ; His face assumed various looks ; at times there prevailed a copious discharge of red sweat from the pores of the skin ; He remained tongue-tied ; He burst the next moment into tears and sometimes in a fit of loud laughter. He appeared to suffer from suffocation and sink dead. He asked several questions in a gentle voice. He sought to pronounce "*Radha*" ; but while uttering "*Ra, Ra, Ra,*" He was interrupted

from pronouncing the remaining part of the word. He again fell down in a swoon and, regaining His consciousness, began to rub His face on the ground. He was about to rend His breast and tear His hair. He held the devotees by the hand and broke out into sobs. He joined His palms and, forgetful of His own Self, begged for the love of *Radha*. He was intoxicated with the joy of wisdom and revealed the truths about Himself. He granted boons to the devotees with the *barabhaya mudra*. He manifested the divine Forms of various Gods and Goddesses (such as *Radha-Krishna*, *Shiva-Durga*, *Kali*, *Sri Gouranga* and so on) from His Body. The sight prevailed upon the devotees to cry, "There stands my *Gora* (*Gouranga*) ; there stands my Mother *Kali* ; there stands my *Krishna*," pointing to Thakur. Some kept their eyes fixed on the Yogacharya ; some rushed on towards Him to hold Him fast in an embrace ; some sank at His hallowed feet ; some tumbled on the holy dust and others lay unconscious. Thus did Thakur enjoy the *kirtanas* along with the *bhaktas*.

"My soul ! great is the glory of His *Name* :
 By It the worst sinners have been redeemed.
 All other works are penalized by the King of Death :
 He heeds naught but the praises of the Lord !
 All pains depart at the utterance of His *Name* ;

*"

Verily, a critical study of the career of Thakur has conveyed to us a definite idea that He was none else other than the Self-evolvent, Self-luminous, Supreme Being ; He was never needful of the observance of practices for reaching either Self-knowledge or the stage of *samadhi* ;

these as well as all emotions and attitudes were quite under His control. And He assumed them at pleasure. This is fully borne out by the experience His staunch adherents, derived from their close association with Him. Many of them found Him, on many occasions, to pass into ecstasy or to be overwhelmed with emotions or to be absorbed in *samadhi*, while He was engaged in taking His meal or writing something or imparting instructions.

Indeed, whatever act of righteousness was done (or whatever part was played by Him) was performed for the guidance, enlightenment, elevation and welfare of ignorant people. When, on the termination of *samadhi*, He became imperfectly aware of the external world, He would cast His bewildered glances to and fro as if to find out a favourite object lost by Him. After a while He would pronounce indistinctly the Names of '*Narayan*', '*Hari*', '*Kali*', '*Durga*', '*Ganga*' and other Gods and Goddesses and say to the devotees assembled near Him, "I shall go to Mother; wouldst thou go ? and so on " *Kirtanas* performed in His presence would inspire in Him such divine emotions as would manifest themselves in and through eightfold signs technically characterised in works on '*bhakti*' as '*ashta sattvika bhava*' (eightfold pure feelings). At such times some parts of the skin on His hands, breast and back would swell and assume the shape and hue of vermillion-coloured mangoes. Songs and recital of holy texts regarding any of the forms of the Supreme would excite in Him peculiar, high feelings associated with the particular Deity. So, *kirtanas* about the separation of *SriRadha* from *SriKrishna* would awaken in Him the consciousness of His oneness with *SriRadha*; and hence

would they cause so much anguish in His heart that, under the influence of the intense pang of separation, He would sometimes tear His hair and sometimes try to rend His breast. Again, dissolved at times into ecstasies, He would say, "I am That ; I am That" and so on.

In the Math *kirttanas*, commenced in the evening, would usually be continued till the early hours of the morning. The termination of the music would be followed by the sounds "pronounce the Name of *Hari*", "pronounce the Name of *Hari*" uttered loudly by the *bhaktas*. They were met by similar sounds made by Thakur dancing in a state of ecstasy ; He would afterwards pronounce "Say, say" and stand still. He would also raise to heaven His hand and move His fore-finger in a circuitous manner to incite the *bhaktas* to fill all quarters with the previously-mentioned sounds on the Name of *Hari*. At this time the cessation of the pronouncements would be unbearable to Him. The dances, raptures and laughter, that would characterise His participation in *kirttanas*, would capture the imagination of the observers. When He would dance, the *bhaktas* would keep strict watch on Him and seek to protect Him against the injury He might receive by dropping down. They had to take particular care also in time of seating Him in that state. As He would be dissolved into ecstasies, He would not regain His consciousness, unless the Name of *Hari* were pronounced loudly. Indeed, the flow of tears, too, now would know no cessation. Some day even the termination of *kirttanas* would not revive in Him the full consciousness of the objects of the outer world ; and so He would ask if it was day or night.

We have sought to describe but briefly Thakur's career at Nabadwip leaving various details, which it is impossible for us even to squeeze in in this sketch. We shall now confine ourselves within a brief survey of the concluding part of the eventful drama of the glorious career.

XVI CAREER AT HOOGLY

"O Lord ! Thy *Name* is the wealth of the poor,
And the refuge of the homeless.
It is the honour of the lowly,
And the sustenance of the hungry souls.
Thou, O Lord ! art the Doer and the Prompter of
all deeds.
Thou dost sense the inmost meaning of all hearts.
Thou alone dost know the extent and measure of Thyself.
The Love of Thyself is born of Thee alone.
Thy praises could be sung by Thee alone.
None else knows how to do it."

The last few years of the eventful, glorious life were passed at "Nitya Math," Chakbazar, Hooghly town. Before the foundation of the holy institution the place, though extensive in area and situated in the heart of and an enviable position in the town, lay deserted by the people, through terror, as the haunt of ghosts and goblins. Hence it was well-suited for the residence of the Lord of ghosts.

However, the spot, distinguished in those days as Bhudeva Babu's garden-house, was purchased at a low price (because of its ill repute) by the devotees under the instruction of Thakur. It was cleared of the jungle, which had rendered it awkward, repulsive and frightful. Thus it became worthy of receiving and accommodating the Yogacharya with the *bhaktas*.

Now it was high time for Thakur to start for the newly-founded institution. So, He set out for Hooghly on the 1st *Jyaistha*, 1313 B.S. (May, 1907). But, to the infinite agony and apprehension of the devotees, the Yogacharya stumbled, as He was about to enter into the Math after alighting at 8 P.M. or so from the carriage. Indeed, this was regarded as an evil omen. However, He made His way into the *Ashram*, followed by the *bhaktas*, who left no stone unturned in ministering to His needs and comforts. After a while He was invited with respectful ceremony to deign to accept the fruits and delicacies that had been devoutly laid before Him for His refreshment. In the mean time devotee Sj. Hari Babu made his appearance there and held before Thakur a delicious mango with some amount of hesitation. Now, on the eve of Thakur's arrival at the Math the devotee had found a mango. He had tasted some portion of the same. And as it had appeared very sweet to him, he had kept it aside with the object of dedicating it to Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, when He would reach Hooghly. But in accordance with the injunctions of the scriptures, no body should make an offering to the Lord of any article, which has been tasted even in part by him. Hence it is quite evident that Hari Babu's

hesitation and confusion were grounded on how he would dedicate to his *Ishta Devata* a fruit, a portion of which had been taken by him beforehand. But Thakur, who knew the inmost sentiments of the devotee, exempted him from the indispensable duty of observing the formalities and readily accepted that tribute and token of love. The Lord shows such mercy to His devoted adherents.

Indeed, being endowed with almost all the characteristics, blessings and privileges of an ancient forest of penance, the Hooghly Math became of great service to Thakur, whose admiration it enjoyed also for the silvan solitude that reigned here. Besides, the want of accommodation, which had been inconveniencing the visitors to the Ampuliapara Math at Nabadwip, became here a thing of the past. Again, in the absence of a Railway communication, the devotees of Calcutta and some other parts of Bengal had to encounter difficulties in going forth to Nabadwip in those days. These disadvantages no more oppressed them, when Thakur took up His quarters in 'Nitya Math'. The bhaktas of Nabadwip, too, could gratify, whenever they pleased, their desire for meetings with their Object of supreme devotion without much inconvenience. These are the reasons why Thakur's choice had most probably fallen on the spot.

Since Thakur's arrival, the most dreaded garden-house ceased to be a source of annoyance and apprehension to the people of the locality. It rather became an object of cordial welcome to them, specially because the atmosphere thereof was kept reverberating by the *kirttanas* sung loudly by the devotees. The ghosts and goblins that had been ruling over the garden, had to abdicate in

favour of their Lord. This was once indicated, among other things, by the breaking with a crash of a branch of a large guava tree after the performance of a *kirttana*. That was the sign, Thakur remarked, that a ghost of a deceased *Brahmana* had reached deliverance from the damned life of a spirit.

The Yogacharya is reported to have also said that immediately after His arrival there He would hear even in His bed-room the sound of invisible foot-steps.

However, not long afterwards there dawned the holy day appointed in the Aryan scriptures as the "*Guru Purnima tithi*". And it goes without saying that it was solemnised with no less magnificence than what had attended the previously-performed ceremonies of a kindred sort. But the special feature of the festivity lay in the composition in *Sanskrit* of inspiring hymns by the (previously-mentioned) great *Sanskrit* scholar named *Pandit* Sj. Sambhunath Vedanta-siddhanta (who had during his student life obtained the grace of the Yogacharya in the holy city of Banares); these portrayed most vividly and in the most impressive manner the forms of different Gods and Goddesses that Thakur assumed on listening, in a state of ecstasy, *kirttanas* regarding Them performed by the assembled devotees at night. These were duly recorded. And when the devout scholar would set himself to recite them in a devout spirit in the holy presence of the Yogacharya, his voice would be choked under the influence of swelling emotions; indeed, these would serve to intercept his heart-felt desire for the performance of the recital. The hymns, that have been published in a book-form, prove even now very much inspiring to the *bhaktas*.

"If a man wants to attain the four cardinal boons,
temporal and spiritual,
Let him seek contact with men disciplined by the
Name.

If a man wants to lead a life of no distress,
Let him always sing the praises of the Name.
If a man seeks true renown,
Let him learn to surrender the thought of self in
the company of the Good.

If the fear of transmigration overawes a man,
Let him take refuge with those who worship the
Name.

Blest is he who thirsts for the sight of God !
I would offer my life to him in sacrifice."

Thakur's residence at Hooghly was followed by the assemblage of an immense confluence of noble souls from various quarters specially of Bengal. On hearing of the glory and greatness of Thakur, they felt urged to throw themselves at His holy feet for the attainment, through His causeless mercy, of the supreme object of human life. Some of them developed so much attachment for Him that, under His guidance, they betook themselves to the blessed life of *sannyasa* (renunciation). Indeed, the supreme devotion of the *bhaktas* to the revered feet of the *Guru* transcended all points of comparison. After the attainment of His grace they had their minds centred exclusively upon Him and nothing on earth, however alluring, succeeded in enticing them away from the thoughts that constantly dwelt upon Him.

In fact, when the *bhaktas* would gather in His holy apartment, Thakur would address to them discourses on reli-

gious subjects. Once, in the course of His discussions, He fell to deal with the institution of caste-system. He referred to the merits and demerits of the system as discussed in various scriptures. In this connection the Samanvayacharya Thakur quoted several *slokas* from them with such a wealth of details that it appeared as if the store-house of the sciences stood open before His eyes. Such a marvellous mastery over and knowledge of the scriptures and such a gigantic memory, as were evinced by the Yogacharya, excited the surprise and admiration of the assembly. The discourses kept them spell-bound and so they were not aware when the stillness of the midnight began to reign over them. But it did not escape the notice of the *Guru*. This is why He recommended the *bhaktas* to betake themselves to repose.

On one occasion the Samanvayacharya Thakur was seated on the bedstead surrounded by the assembled *bhaktas*, when one Sj. Satya Ranjan, the younger brother of *Kaviraj* Sj. Chintaharan Mukherjee of Kalighat, happened to enter into the holy apartment. But he marvelled to observe the luminous form of *Bala Gopala* (*SriKrishna* in His childhood was thus called) sitting on the bedstead. He (*Bala Gopal*) was, under the influence of fickleness natural to a child, shaking His leg with the finger of His hand raised to His mouth. The sight besotted the visitor's understanding so much so that he even omitted to bow low to the revered feet. However, great was his amazement, as he found, after a while, not the dark-skinned *Bala Gopala* but in His stead a fully-developed Form of a white complexion brightened with the hue of molten gold. This awakened in him the conviction that the *Gopala*

of Sri Brindaban had now appeared there as Sri Sri Nityagopal.

One of the special features of Thakur's career at Hooghly was that often would He remain invisible to the *bhaktas*. He was no more as easily available and accessible as He had been during His residence at the Ampuliapara Math at Nabadwip. On some day He would be once visible ; on some day the privilege would twice be accorded to the devotees. But sometimes the door would remain bolted for three consecutive days or so.* Again, at times *kirtanas* would be performed throughout the whole night.

*During His career at Hooghly Thakur left the precincts of the Math only on three occasions. One of them was the day of the election of the Chairman of the Hooghly Municipality.

There was in the town a Zemindar named Babu Bepin Behary Mittra. He was also a prominent member of the Hooghly Bar. His name bore a lofty standing there. Besides, he was devotedly attached to Thakur. His love for Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva would manifest itself in more ways than one. Indeed, when he could procure good articles of food, he would, without delay, present some to Him. The door of his well-guarded, favourite garden would remain always open to His disciples, who would have a free access into it and could cull plenty of flowers uninterruptedly. However, once he sought to be elected Chairman of the Hooghly Municipality. He was contested by a gentleman, who had appointed a *Tantric* (a man well-versed in the performance of rites prescribed by the Tantras) to foil the efforts of his rival. Driven to desperation, Bepin Babu humbly approached Thakur with the fervent prayer that his efforts might be crowned with success. Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva had the tenderness which could not be deaf to the earnest entreaty of a suppliant. So, He was struck with compassion at the despondency of Bepin Babu. Then did He present Himself to the polling station incognito in the company of two disciples. But the awful majesty of His countenance arrested the gaze, nay

These would be followed by such results as the *kirttanas* intoned at Nabadwip had been described as producing; but instead of dancing, Thakur would shake so violently that even the massive and strongly built bedstead, on which He would remain sitting, would seem to give way with a crash.

Thakur's life at 'Nitya Math' was marked also by His devout participation in the performance of the recital of the holy texts adored by different sects and communities. Among them mention may be made of '*Gita*, *Chandi*, *Bhagawata*, *Mahabhangawata*, the *Puranas*, the *Tantras*, *Chaitanyacharitamrita* *Chaitanyabhagawata*' and so on and 'the Bible, Of the Imitation of Christ' and the '*Koran*'. Indeed, He would often remain so much absorbed in listening to the recital that He would not know when the day-light would dawn after the disappearance of the night.

In fact, every act of Thakur would excite a deep interest in the *bhaktas*. So, when He would descend into the tank in the Math (now called *Nitya kundu*) for the sake of ablution, they would gather on the bank thereof to observe His behaviour. He would indulge in a regular sporting in water in a state of ecstasy. He would sometimes sprinkle and throw water like a child and sometimes indulge in such amusements as would prevail upon the observing

attracted the admiration of the dense, expectant multitude that had gathered there. So, the crowd eagerly opened a passage for Thakur. And He made His way to the polling booth and gave His votes in favour of Bepin Babu. Indeed, unflinching devotion coupled with magnetic faith never misses of its reward. The grace of Thakur worked a wonder. Bepin Babu was elected Chairman in the teeth of all oppositions from his rival.

devotees to think that Thakur would recall the parts He played in His past careers. Hence would He commence those operations and continue them for two hours or so.

Now, among the devotees there was a *Brahmachari* (subsequently a Sannyasin named Srimat Swami Nityananda Abadhuta). He lost his father before the adoption of the life of sannyasa ; so he was advised by Thakur to perform the ceremony of presenting *pinda* (the lump or ball of food offered as an oblation to deceased ancestors) in the holy city of Gaya. But to one, who had surrendered himself to the revered feet of the Supreme, Omniscient and Omnipotent Thakur, the idea of going forth to Gaya for the observance of the rites leaving behind the Visible Incarnation of *Brahman* (the Eternal), appeared quite revolting. He could, by no means, reconcile himself to it. And so he approached Thakur with the fervent prayer of being permitted to do the deed at His holy feet. In view of the unwavering devotion, faith and earnestness of the *bhakta*, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva could not help granting his prayer. So in the solitary apartment, the bed-room of the Yogacharya, He seated himself on the bedstead and placed His holy feet on a plate of brass. In this posture He pronounced the *mantras* (holy, mystic formulae), exhorting the devotee, in an ecstatic state, to repeat them and place at the holy feet the offerings of the ingredients requisite. To the devout performer of the ceremony Thakur appeared to be the Visible Lord (or the Presiding Deity) of Gaya. And great, indeed, was the joy with which the devotee was thrilled, when he found that Thakur had granted him a grace, which had never been shown by any

other *Avataras* at any other time. However, when he fell asleep at night, he found, in the dream-state, his deceased father appearing before him with an ochre-dyed cloth on. This was a clear indication of the fact that, through the grace of Thakur, the *bhakta's* father had reached liberation. Another devotee, too, named Sj. Meghnath Babu, placed obsequial offerings at the holy feet of Thakur. Kindred rites are now performed at the sacred burial of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva at Kalighat-Calcutta Mahanirvan Math by many devout souls for the deliverance of their ancestors from the painful cycle of births and deaths.

Indeed, Thakur was the very 'Glory of supreme, divine wisdom, the very Torch of supreme, divine knowledge and the very Flood of supreme, divine love'. And so He had no desire to fulfil and no end to achieve ; still He was given to practise the severest sort of penance and righteousness in its manifold aspects. His sole aim was to set thus a bright, exemplary, noble ideal of unflinching devotion to real righteousness, of self-renunciation and self-restraint for the enlightenment and guidance of aspirants, nay for inspiring in them a spirit of real dispassion (or indifference to the transitory objects of the world). Verily, this behaviour of Thakur tallies with the following utterances of Lord *SriKrishna* : "Whatsoever a great man doeth, that other men also do ; the standard he setteth up, by that the people go." (21) Gita, Third Discourse.

In fact, He indicated, by His conduct and behaviour, how averse to worldly enjoyments a devotee should be for the achievement of the supreme end of human life. He would feel greatly rejoiced, when the absence of worldly

desires and passions would manifest itself in the bearing and gestures of a *bhakta*. Often would He say with all the warmth and frankness of His nature, "I shall be very happy, indeed, if the people of the whole world can espouse a life of dispassion!" Would Thakur indicate thus that

"Peace, that speaks the Heavenly Giver ;
 Peace, to worldly minds unknown ;
 Peace divine, that lasts for ever ;
 Peace, that comes from God alone" ?

But evidently with an eye to the requirements of the world and the laws governing it, He would remark, "Ah ! Is that possible ?" Now, once a *bhakta*, who had adopted the life of renunciation, obtained, as a present, from a friend a piece of costly woollen cloth. He covered his body with it and presented himself to Thakur's apartment. And as soon as he became visible to Him, the devotee's dress did not elude His observation. So, He began to cast significant side-glances on him again and again. These at once arrested the attention of the intelligent *bhakta*. And thence did he readily notice with shame the expression of Thakur's inner feeling on His face. So, it was quite possible for him to realize that to Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, who was in favour of plain living and high thinking, his dress appeared quite distasteful. However, the next day he made it over to another friend and furnished himself with a tattered, ragged quilt. Thus dressed, the *bhakta* appeared in the holy, sublime presence. And no sooner had He seen him than He exultingly remarked, "Bravo ! Very nice ! You look very well to-day !"

"He is a prince among men
 Who has effaced his pride in the company of the Good.
 He who deems himself as of the lowly,
 Shall be esteemed as the highest of the high.
 He who lowers his mind to the dust of all men's feet,
Sees the Name of God enshrined in every heart.
 He who bears no malice in his bosom,
 Will see a friend in every man.
 The man of God will receive pain and pleasure
 with equal thanks,
 And will be unaffected by the good or evil of others."

In fact, sincerity and straightness were highly appreciated and admired by Thakur. A man endowed with these qualities would bask in the sun-shine of His grace. And, contrary to His practice and intention, He would even unfold many of the secrets of His True Self to him. This is well-attested by the following :

A gentleman of Ranigunj obtained the mercy of and was initiated by Him. Then did he humbly seek His instruction as to how he would meditate upon God. Now, there was not even an iota of crookedness in the devotee's heart. So, Thakur said to him, "Look here ; meditate on this form." Again, Srimat Keshabananda, who has already been dealt with previously, became distinguished for his straightforwardness in dealings. Whenever he would appear in the holy presence, he would make a clean breast of his heart. He was given to utter quite unhesitatingly and frankly to Thakur all the omissions and commissions of life. Indeed, the attitude, that he had the fortune to develop towards Him, can, in unqualified terms, be likened to that of a

simple child towards his father. Verily, how much frankness is necessary in openly declaring before Thakur, "Oh ! wherever I may go I never come across a form as lovely, as beautiful and as splendid as this (i.e. Thakur's) !" In fact, the *bhakta* acquired to himself the glorious reward of his unflinching adherence to deep and transparent sincerity ; since Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva cordially welcomed it with the remark, "It is His frank-heartedness that has been sweeping off all the blemishes of *Churho* and delivering him from the clutches of all offences." Really, Thakur was the very Embodiment of compassion and the very Ocean of love. The devotees clung firmly to the belief that He would forgive them all their crimes, however heinous. This lulled them into a sense of absolute security. Still once a bhakta humbly approached Him with the query, "Do You take offence, when we commit one against You ?" It was immediately followed by the reply, "Yes, I take. But it is all swept off by the flood of love." Ah ! ruminating over His infinite grace, the devotees evidently thought, "Can there be an assurance of security sweeter and more charming than this !" In His love for His *bhaktas* Thakur was above all praise. As a Purifier of the fallen and the vicious, He stood out, we think, pre-eminent amongst all Gurus. In His solicitude for the welfare of His devotees He was, we feel, without a parallel.

"For ever gracious is the Lord,
For ever faithful to His word :
By sweet experience now I prove
His mercy, His unchanging love."

Verily, once, during the Christmas festival, a great

many adherents of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva flocked to Nitya Math from various quarters. And when they assembled before Thakur, He proclaimed a prominent teaching of the Bible thus, "Confession is the best atonement for sins". Thus did He seem to the *bhaktas* to exhort them, in the attitude of Jesus Christ, to confess to Him the sins committed by them. Many of them opened their minds to Him, touching quite frankly upon all the omissions and commissions of their life. But there was among the assembled *bhaktas* one, who, subject to a deep sense of shame, self-loathing and contrition, said in a pitiful tone, "Father, I have committed the most atrocious sort of crime. Although these are my nearest and dearest ones, I feel too shy and depressed to disclose that before them. I can, however, confide it to You merely and that privately. Deign to forgive me !" So saying he burst into tears. Thakur, who was, as already indicated, the Ocean of mercy, would be deeply moved and touched by the distress of His *bhaktas*. So, His tender heart melted and He said in a deep voice, "Sorrow not; worry not; I draw out to Myself all your sins, however horrible and atrocious they may be; you are now thoroughly purged from them. But I warn you : be very particular about your future conduct". In sooth, it is natural for such a soul to crave for the *Guru's* guidance thus :

"Lead me, Heavenly Father, lead me
O'er the world's tempestuous sea ;
Guard me, guide me, keep me, feed me,
For I have no help but Thee :
Yet possessing
Every blessing
If my God my Father be."

While Thakur was residing at Nitya Math, there came one Sj. Biswabandhu Mazumdar, L. M. S. He was an eminent Allopathic practitioner at Rangpur and became distinguished for his efficiency in treatment. He happened to know from the previously-mentioned Sj. Nityagopal Goswami of the glory and greatness of Thakur and hence felt impelled to throw himself upon His causeless mercy. So he repaired to the holy abode at Hooghly and sought and obtained shelter at the holy feet of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. Now, although he was amply provided with all the objects of desire that human beings usually crave for and although he reached an enviable degree of fame and renown, nothing could keep him bound to the world. He denied himself of all family affections and earthly ties in no time. Indeed, his attainment of the grace of Thakur was immediately followed by his adoption of the life of renunciation. And, after espousing this life, he became known as Srimat Swami Haripadananda Abadhuta. Deep, indeed, was his realization of the greatness of Thakur ; various inspiring verses, that he composed to vindicate the glory and greatness of Thakur, bear a glowing testimony to this. However, subject to an unquenchable thirst for reaching the Supreme, he once said to Thakur with a perplexed mind and tearful eyes, "My Lord, I am really an unfortunate man, since I have not yet been able to realize God !" This pathetic appeal of the *bhakta* sensibly touched Thakur's feelings. So, holding Him by the hand, He said, "Viswabandhu, My darling, haven't you reached God yet ?" This pronouncement was immediately followed by His absorption in *samadhi*. And it goes without saying that Srimat Haripadananda attained

to supreme bliss and peace after realizing Thakur as his *Ishta Devata*.

Once a devotee said to Thakur in passing and by the way, "Father, *Shiva*, *Vishnu* and *Krishna* have for their Female *Energies* *Durga*, *Lakshmi* and *Radha* respectively. Besides, the other Gods, too, have their Female *Energies*. Now, who is Your *Energy*?" At this Thakur said, "I, too, have My *Energy*. She is so attached to Me that She cannot live apart from and independently of Me. She remains merged in Me." This solemn pronouncement of Thakur filled the devotees with high reverential admiration.

In fact, Thakur entertained the deepest possible affection for His disciples. This is well-attested by various events of His glorious career. Now, there lived in Calcutta a young man named Sj. Kalidhan De. He belonged to a very rich family. But an inner urge prompted him to seek to adopt the life of renunciation. So, he bent his steps towards Hooghly. And, after reaching the desired destination, he approached Thakur humbly with a fervent prayer for the achievement of his end. He went even so far as to have a piece of cloth dyed with ochre for the purpose, when his father appeared on the scene. Evidently the gentleman was bent upon deterring his son from the path of dispassion and attaching him to the world. He (the father) felt sentimentally affected so much so that he held Kalidhan Babu in a fast embrace and burst into tears in deep sadness of heart. But Thakur seemed to be more touched with sorrow, since He wept more bitterly. This pathetic scene of sorrow struck the assembled *bhaktas* dumb. They thought, "How is it that Thakur, too, is

shedding tears ? Has He been entangled in the meshes of illusion and delusion ?" But evidently they failed to realize that the conduct and behaviour of Thakur, whom illusion and delusion served as slaves, defied analysis and scrutiny. Indeed, the canons of logic could not be applied to Him. However, when Sj. Kalidhan's father succeeded in turning his mind away from the life the young man had resolved to espouse, the gentleman went away with his son. Then Thakur said to His *bhaktas*, "When I saw Kalidhan's father weeping for his son, I thought, 'If the earthly father can bear so much love for his son, ah ! how much love the Supreme Father of the Universe has for His creatures !'" This pronouncement was at once followed by His absorption in *samadhi*.

Really, when the Supreme Being incarnates Himself on earth in the form of a human being, He moves, talks and behaves like those in the midst of whom He passes His days here. Thus does He usually hide the splendour of His Godhead. If He were always given to make a display of His Lordly powers and infinite spiritual wealth, His earthly career would lose its charm and beauty. In that case few individuals could make bold to draw nigh to or keep company with Him. So, His behaviour resembles that of an ordinary human being. And so, He laughs, weeps and eats and does various other acts like him. This is why many can look upon Him as One of their relations and friends and hence develop devoted attachment for Him and so make the best of their birth as men. It is for this reason that Thakur would say, "If the formless, Supreme Being did not appear before you after assuming a Form, how could you come into touch with

Him ? Indeed, He is far above all desires and wants. But if He did not appear to be interested in receiving gifts, presents and services and if He did not appear to be in need of various articles of daily use, how could you feel inclined and prevailed upon to render devoutly your services to Him ? How could you find the opportunity and privilege of reverently waiting upon Him and placing at His holy feet various offerings and making a provision for the daily necessities of His life ? Again, He is far above sorrows and griefs. But when they assail you, He seems to be smitten with them out of deep sympathy ; He seems to be moved and touched with compassion : He seems to be melted into tears in order to allay your sufferings. (He plays various parts like an actor and remains quite unaffected in all conditions.)" Blessed, indeed, are those who can develop the noble spirit of unflinching faith in and undeviating devotion towards an Incarnation of God. But those 'who are quite carnally-minded or those whose thoughts constantly move in the region of transitoriness and illusion, are deprived of the blessings of the deepest communion and the most intimate association with Him. Ah ! these individuals toss about the swelling waves of disbelief ; they are swayed by the impetuous winds of doubt. In fact, the noble spirit of magnetic faith and unwavering devotion is the gift and grace of God.' And it is natural for the fortunate man, who has attained this grace, to pray,

"Let me be with Thee where Thou art,
My Saviour, my eternal rest ;
Then only will this longing heart
Be fully and for ever blest."

Verily, during Thakur's residence at Hooghly a great many men of Sarisha,* a village in the Diamond Harbour-subdivision, won His mercy. Among them there was a gentleman named Nageu Babu, who was once bent upon starting for Hooghly along with his mother. But as his wife was in the family way, he was compelled to leave her behind. He accorded the same treatment to his younger, widowed sister, since there should be some body at home to look after the pregnant lady. But both of them had a heart-felt desire for obtaining refuge at the holy feet of Thakur along with Nagen Babu and his mother. However, Thakur had addressed to Nagen Babu's wife, in her dream-state, the communication that the state of pregnancy should needs form no barrier to an aspirant's resort to the path of liberation. This was brought to the notice of her husband; still he did not lend his support to her proposal for accompanying him to Nitya Math. But he did not realize that no human

*Indeed, during His residence in Calcutta, Benares, and Brindaban and careers at Nabadwip and Hooghly and visits to various other places, Thakur illumined many minds by the light of supreme, divine wisdom; and He stirred many hearts with the inspiring feelings of supreme devotion and divine love; nay He liberated many souls from the clutches of illusion and delusion by the glory of His causeless mercy. It is impossible to record here a detailed account thereof. Many saw the Divine Forms of Sri Durga, Sri Kali, Sri Shiva, Sri Rama, Sri MahaLakshmi, Sri Hari-Hara, Sri Dattatreya, Sri Krishna, Sri Buddha, Sri Samkaracharya, Sri Gouranga, Sri Raitha, and so on and even Lord Jesus manifested from His splendid Form. In short, He revealed Himself in manifold Forms at one and the same time to many devotees. Even now He graces many *bhaktas* with such revelations.

contrivance can intercept the will of God. However, when he got into the carriage, the horse dropped down on the ground and one of the wheels gave way. He sought another vehicle but his hopes were sadly disappointed, inasmuch as he was ended in securing none. In this situation did he recall the dream dreamt by his wife. And so he dropped the idea of leaving behind his wife and sister. Meanwhile the horse regained its usual vigour and the wheel of the carriage was thoroughly repaired. Now did he suffer the two ladies to bear him company. It goes without saying that they all reached the desired destination and had their noble object achieved. But Nagen Babu had an aunt who was quite unwilling to resign herself to the grace of Thakur.

However, Nagen Babu and the nearest and dearest ones could thus betake themselves to the way to deliverance, no doubt ; but, as already indicated, his aunt, whose age ought to have subjected her to an impatient yearning after the attainment of the mercy of Thakur, developed towards the *Guru* an attitude, which was at once a shame and a disgrace to one of her experience and calibre. But whenever the Yogacharya wanted His mercy to drop upon any individual, however stubborn and audacious, its course was irresistible. Indeed, the person would be exposed to a situation that would compel him (or her) to crave for His grace. Thus once when the old lady occupied herself with devotional duties in her village home, Thakur, though staying at the same time at Hooghly, suddenly appeared before and began to whip her so severely that she dropped down senseless on the ground. The pitiable condition, into which she had fallen, arrested the attention

of her sons who hastened to the spot. Great was their astonishment, when they found stripes in her body. And on regaining her consciousness she related the event to them. So they thought it indispensably necessary to present her to the Yogacharya in no time. Meanwhile her attitude towards Him underwent a blessed change. However she was conveyed to 'Nitya Math' and ushered into the holy presence of Thakur. She submitted a detailed account of what had achieved a thorough change in her composition. At this the *Guru* sought to explain away the incident, which bore such a glowing testimony to His Lordly powers, with an evasive reply thus, "I never left the bounds of the Hooghly Math. How was it possible for Me to have flogged you in that way?" Be that as it may, Nagen Babu's aunt now tendered Him her allegiance, heart and hand.

Indeed, Thakur would always keep His benign hands stretched for protecting His devotees. This will be evidenced by the following events, too :

(i) Once Nagen Babu went on a visit to a relative's house at a village known as Panchgan. By chance the house caught fire. The flames rolled on and consumed it part by part. And it was not long ere they made inroads upon the part occupied by the devotee, who then slept too deeply to be aware of the bustle and commotion the calamity had excited. But danger, however threatening and impending, could scarcely involve a disciple of the Yogacharya in its pursuit, when He would intercept it. Indeed, Thakur now presented Himself to the room, in which Nagen Babu lay buried in deep sleep, and woke him up with a smart slap on the back, saying, "Arise.

Thou still sleepest, when conflagration is ready to hold thee in its grip !” At this the *bhakta* sprang to his feet and hurried out. To his utter surprise, the room at once fell an easy prey to the invading and beleaguering flames. He was overwhelmed with a deep sense of gratitude to Thakur, whose timely intervention and mysterious appearance in the room, had saved him so miraculously from the jaws of sure death. However, it goes without saying that when the Yogacharya woke up Nagen Babu, He was never found leaving the precincts of the Hooghly Math.

“Prostrate before the mercy seat,
I dare not, if I would, despair ;
None ever perished at Thy feet,
And I will lie for ever there.”

While dealing with the glory and greatness of a Real *Guru* as well as his supreme mercy to His disciples, Thakur has said, in His work on the ‘Universal Religion’, that a Master of this type always keeps strict watch upon His adherents. And so when any one of them is exposed to the danger of being led astray, He (the *Guru*) at once comes to his succour and leads him to the right path. Indeed, the Yogacharya practised this sort of kindness to His followers during His earthly career (and is even now doing so. This is fully realized by many of his *bhaktas*.) Once a young man, after winning the mercy of Thakur, fell a victim to the unbridled passion of lust and bent his steps to a brothel for the gratification of his sensual craving. But as soon as he crossed the threshold thereof, he was resisted by the sight of his *Ishta Devata*—a sight which subjected him to such overwhelming

raptures that he sank down unconscious on the floor. Thus was his lust charmed down under the overpowering influence of the grace of Thakur. And the young man felt prevailed upon to bow most profoundly to the same harlot, with whom he had desired to hold sexual intercourse. He also addressed her again and again as mother and presented her most respectfully with the sum, with which he had made it a point to enjoy her. This was not all. The *bhakta* was eventually purified of all vicious tendencies and desires and prepared himself for the life of renunciation. Then did he approach Thakur for the achievement of his noble purpose, which was in no time fulfilled by the Yogacharya. Indeed, what a miracle can be worked by the mercy of Thakur !

(ii) On another occasion Thakur was seated, as usual, on His bed-stead in His apartment in Nitya Math, when the sound of a sudden and vehement outcry, arising from the same, broke upon the ear of a *bhakta* and startled him. It resembled a shriek uttered by a person oppressed with a horribly burning sensation. At that the devotee hurried into the room helter-skelter. To his utter horror, he found the usual white complexion of Thakur's Form usurped, in a moment, by the darkest possible colour ; besides, afflicted with excruciating pain, Thakur said, "Aha ! I am being oppressed with a severe, burning sensation caused by poison ! But My beloved '*Churho*' (Srimat Keshabannanda) has been healed and saved ; this gives Me much relief !" Indeed, with tremors of alarm, he noticed and heard all these things, which evidently struck the devotee dumb. However, scarcely had a few minutes passed, when he was astounded to see the usual complexion of

Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva's body restored to it. The *bhakta* cast bewildered glances on and then kept gazing at Thakur, since an awful amazement had laid hold on him. He was at a loss to account for those phenomena. He was dazzled by this mysterious behaviour of Thakur. Now, while this scene of horror, confusion and amazement was being enacted in the Math at Hooghly, Srimat Keshabananda bent his steps to Sardanga in order to witness a fair there. In the way he was oppressed with hunger and thirst. Just at that time his glance fell upon a ripe cucumber lying before him. But it seemed to have been slightly pecked by a bird or bitten by an insect ; still, finding no other means of allaying his hunger and thirst, he made it a point to eat the fruit, leaving off the affected or injured part. So, he put a portion thereof into his mouth, when he fell an easy prey to an unbearably burning sensation, which rendered him quite senseless. But in a mysterious way the most afflicting malady, which had so speedily effected the loss of his sensibility, became within a short while, a thing of the past. And hence health and strength were restored to his violently affected system. Evidently these happenings appeared to be insoluble riddles to him. However, an invincible, inner urge prompted him to bend his steps to the previously-mentioned Nitya Math. Then, after his arrival at the desired destination, he earnestly sought an interview with Thakur. But the *bhaktas* described to him the details of the foregoing, wonderful incident, which was one of the clearest demonstrations of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva's causeless love for His devotees. At this Srimat Keshabananda was violently shaken with an impetuous

tempest of emotions. His gifted imagination delineated a picture of the tremendous suffering and excruciating pain Thakur had, of his own accord, courted for relieving his distress and saving his life. This subjected him to bursts of overwhelming sorrow. And his heart melted into tears. It was, indeed, a stupendous miracle of healing that Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva had addressed to him. Now, just as he was admitted into the holy presence, he wept like a boy in extreme agitation. Thakur quieted the storm of his heart with soothing words of consolation. But it was quite natural for a man of the calibre and type of Srimat Keshabananda to keep brooding over the unbounded mercy he had received at Thakur's hands and to reverence it with adoring gratitude.

Verily, being the Preacher of the all-embracing doctrine of the Universal Religion, the Samanvayacharya Thakur had all the festivals celebrated in His Math. So, on the occasion of the *Durga Pujah* a great many devotees assembled there to participate in the festivity. But all their desire for participation was intercepted by an accident. One of them was suddenly down with a severe attack of cholera, which could be cured by no medical treatment. Now the matter was brought to the notice of Thakur ; and He readily prepared a vessel of *sharbat* with whey and recommended it to the use of the devotee. Great was their amazement, when the *bhaktas* found that a disease, which had defied all remedies, was so marvellously cured by so simple a thing. However, what had threatened to interrupt the festival being thus removed, the devotees now dedicated the full measure of their energy and devotion to a magnificent celebration thereof with *kirtana* and other functions.

Thus the termination of the *balabhoga* (break-fast) ceremony was followed by the assemblage of the devotees in Thakur's room. At His advice one of them addressed himself to the task of reciting '*Youa rasistha*' (the title of a celebrated work treating chiefly of the truths of the *Vedanta* system). Scarcely had one or two lines been read out, when Thakur became absorbed in *samadhi*. Then in a state of semi-consciousness He asked the *bhakta* to mark certain expressions therein. Again did he begin to read and again did Thakur pass into ecstasy. Thus was the progress hampered so much so that in the course of two hours one page only was finished. Now did the time for the *bhaktas* to partake of the *prosada* come. And so Thakur ceased the recital with a significant gesture. This was construed by the devotees as a signal for them to go out for taking the *prosada*.

Thus did the *Sasthi* (sixth day of a lunar fortnight) pass to make room for the *Saptami* (the first day of the worship of Goddess *Durga*) *pujah*, which was hailed with delight by the *bhaktas*. Some of them devoted themselves to the work of decorating the elegant and majestic form of Thakur with floral wreaths and other articles; and some prepared themselves for placing their offerings of flowers and other ingredients at the holy feet. But Srimat Keshabananda made it a point to perform the act first. To this end he stepped forth towards Thakur in an attitude of deep devotion. But his extreme ardour for the discharge of the duty had rendered him forgetful of the preceding condition, namely the washing of the hands. When, on enquiry, Thakur learnt that he had not done so, He advised the *bhakta* to observe the simple rule of purifi-

cation. But if Srimat Keshabananda then went away, his long-cherished desire for making the offering at the first chance would be frustrated. This he must not do. So he asked his beloved brother, Srimat Pranabananda, to put flowers and the other ingredients requisite on his head in order that he might do the act by means of the head and not of the hands, which are usually employed for the purpose. This wonderful presence of mind, a sign of the purification of reason, which was indicated by the devotee, filled his brethren with delighted wonder and gave Thakur much pleasure ; and so the Yogacharya welcomed it with a giggle. However, the other *bhaktas*, too, placed their offerings in a devout spirit at the holy feet of Thakur ; now did He become so much absorbed in the consciousness of His oneness with Goddess *Durga* that some of His disciples found the Form of the Goddess manifested from His Body.

Then did the time for dinner come. And the *bhaktas* took their seats for partaking of the *prosada*. It should, however, be stated, in this connection, that caste distinction is a thing that did not influence the dealings of Thakur's adherents with one another. In accordance with the instruction of the *Guru* they regarded themselves as *wid* children of the same Lord Jnanananda. This is why one, who was assigned the lowest position in society, was looked upon, in no way, as inferior to his brother, who happened to belong to the highest order (in society). Again, the disciples of Thakur learnt from Him how *prosada* should be dealt with. The scriptures maintain that the supreme holiness of *prosada* is not in the least affected, even if it be touched and partaken of by non-Hindus. This

injunction of the scriptures was strictly followed by the devotees of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. So, although they were given to keep aside as unholy the remains of another's meal, they would eagerly accept the leavings of *prosada* from the plates or platters of their brethren. Indeed, they realized the greatness and the elevating and purifying influence of the holy thing, inasmuch as it would inspire in them high emotions of devotion, which would find expression through tears, tremor and horripilation. Even now the truly devoted followers of Thakur cling firmly to these usages and customs.

However, the *Durga Puja* festival was celebrated with eclat and zeal. The termination of the festivities was a signal for the *bhaktas* to bid the *Guru* farewell. It was a touching scene of sorrow. The tearful eyes of the devotees appealed to the tender heart of Thakur and He said, "I am always anxious for you all ; I will do what will prove beneficial to you, even if you do not observe practices for reaching spiritual development. My connection with you is a permanent one. My love for you is quite selfless. It is not dependent on your attachment for and devotion to Me. Even he, who lacks love and reverence for Me, is an object of as much welcome to Me as he, who is most devotedly attached to Me." These words of consolation sweetly addressed, and the assurance of security so definitely given to the *bhaktas* by the *Guru*, bear a glowing testimony to the causeless mercy and selfless attachment He had for His disciples.

Now, while Thakur was residing at Hooghly, a young *Brahmana* named Sj. Krishna Majumdar was affected with an impatient yearning after the attainment of a *Sat Guru*.

Under the instruction of a friend, he set out for Benares to seek an interview with his (his friend's) Master. But his straitened pecuniary circumstances did not allow him to buy the ticket requisite. However, he made his way to the platform without the least resistance at the gate ; and there appeared none either to oppose his entrance into a compartment of the train to the holy city or to molest him in the course of the journey. Meanwhile the train moved on. But scarcely had it stopped at the Mugolsarai station, when a young man of impressive looks and demeanour handed over to Sj. Krishna Majumdar a ticket for the Benares station and vanished. Be that as it may, when the train reached the desired destination, the devotee alighted and made for the residence of his friend's *Guru* ; but he (the *Guru*) delivered to the aspirant the intimation that he was destined to be initiated not by him but by Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. It behoved the *bhakta* now to make searches for his *Guru*.

When at night Sj. Krishna Majumdar fell asleep, he found, in the dream-state, a Great Man arising out of the phellus of *Visweswar-Shiva*. His body was suffused with a hue that excelled in splendour the colour of molten gold. The elegance and majesty of the expression of His countenance were augmented by the dark moustache with which His upper lip was clothed and the beard which adorned His lovely chin and round and vermillion cheeks. This excited his wonder. However, the following day Sj. Majumdar availed himself of the train to Sri Brindaban. And on reaching the sacred place, he picked, by chance, acquaintance with one Sj. Nagen Roy, and accompanied him to his residence. Here did he come

across the photo of One who perfectly resembled the *Great Man*, who had revealed Himself to the *bhakta* in dream in Benares. And on enquiry, he learnt from Sj. Roy that the *Great Man* was his (Sj. Nagen's) *Guru*, who was at that time living at Hooghly. This communication prevailed upon Sj. Krishna Majumdar to start for the town in no time. And arrived at the town, the *bhakta* stepped towards Nitya Math, where he sought an interview with the Yogacharya. The devotees there brought the matter to the notice of Thakur ; but He said that Sj. Krishna's desire could not be fulfilled until he first went back to his mother to allay her distressed heart. When, after carrying out Thakur's order, the *bhakta* again presented himself to the Hooghly Math and begged to be kindly ushered into the *Guru's* presence, his prayer was readily granted. Then, on meeting the Yogacharya, Krishna Babu submitted an account of the dream, which Sri Sri Nitya Deva attended to with a giggle and fulfilled his desire for initiation.

One thing, which deserves a tribute of consideration, in this connection, is that Thakur enjoined rules of conduct on His disciples according to their calibre and the state of their moral and spiritual being. Sj. Krishna Majumdar was a wordly-minded man. So, the Yogacharya advised him first to satisfy his mother, since a man of his condition could not hope to win the grace of the Supreme without first gratifying his parents, who had a right to demand implicit obedience and deep reverence from him. But quite contrary were the rules He would ordain for a devotee, who would aspire to renunciation and liberation. He would be instructed on the indispensable necessity of severing totally all bonds of attachment and affection.

for the nearest and dearest ones, if he desired to reach the supreme end of human life by surrendering himself to the holy feet of the Lord. Again, the Yogacharya advised some devotee to shake off his attraction for western culture since the attainment of degrees might perhaps inconvenience him. But He made it a point to help another *bhakta* with the money he would need for attaiuing higher (college) education. Even He Himself played the part of a learner in order to set an example as to how even an aspirant should equip himself with the arms of knowledge and wisdom for the achievement of his noble purposes (of advancing spiritually and preaching a doctrine). Indeed, He had, as already indicated, a masterful command over the English language even.

Verily, Thakur not only purified the fallen but also converted atheists into believers in the existence of God, nay real *bhaktis*. There was a highly educated gentleman named Trailokya Babu, who bore a glowing testimony to this. He was a cousin of devotee Sj. Girish Chandra Ghosh and a Sub-Judge in the Chinsurah court. For some reason or other he developed much attachment for Thakur. But he did not believe in the existence of ghosts and goblins, which he condemned as hallucinations. This was due to his want of faith in the existence of God. However, once he fell a victim to the oppression of evil spirits. These did not allow him even to take his meal comfortably, inasmuch as he would be disturbed at such times with stones and dung thrown near his plate by invisible hands. When he found no other remedy for this evil, he resigned himself to the mercy of Thakur, and submitted to His guidance as a truly devoted disciple.

As, after his initiation, he started for home in a carriage, Thakur sent some *bhakta*s to bear him company. But the evil spirits, whose displeasure he had evidently incurred, threw stones at him. He began to mutter the *mantra* with which Thakur had initiated him. Still the ghosts appeared before him as shadows, made mouths at him and mimicked his mode of saying his prayers. However, after a time their tyranny gave way to the supreme influence of the *mantram*.

We have already referred to the fact that even the down-trodden and the fallen enjoyed the mercy of Thakur. Here we quote another instance which bears a glowing testimony to this :

There was a cowherdess at Hooghly named Golap. She was a woman of questionable character. But she craved for the mercy of the Yogacharya. Now, Thakur, who had declined at times to accord the simple privilege of even an interview to vastly learned men of high rank and unimpeachable character, stretched His gracious hands to the harlot. But it was a pity that even this effected little change in her moral life. So the milk, she would supply even to the *Guru*, would be mixed with water. Still Thakur would accept it gladly. On one occasion she lay over-powered with dead drunkenness, which made it quite impossible for her to feed her cows. The matter did not escape the all-penetrating gaze of the Omniscient Thakur, though He lived far away from her home. This is why he deputed two devotees from the Math to supply fodder to the starving cows. On another occasion she took opium mingled with wine. This led to her arrest and incarceration. In this pitiful condition evidently she

thought, "Thakur is the Purifier of the fallen. How is it then that He has withheld His mercy from this unholy creature?" These expressions of sorrow appealed to the heart of the Yogacharya. Thenceforward He would, though always present in the Math, visit the prison evidently assuming another body and supply her with food every day. Can there be any other instance of causeless mercy to the down-trodden and the vicious?

Indeed, Thakur's love for His disciples, too, was mysterious. Each of them felt that Thakur bore towards him the highest degree of affection. But some *bhaktas*, of whom mention may be made of Sj. Purna Chandra Ghosh of Sarsuna and Sj. Prasanna Kumar Ghosh of Barisal, even would sit on His lap in the attitude of children, when Thakur would be lost in deep contemplation on the Mother of the Universe. Once a *kirttana* on Goddess *Kali* was being performed. Purna Babu was all attention in hearing it but became afterwards so overwhelmed with emotions that he sprang to his feet and jumped on the lap of the *Guru* and began to suck the breasts.

However, we have already said that a vast concourse of devotees would assemble in the Hooghly math. Indeed, Thakur had to supply both dinner and supper to fifty or sixty heads daily. But it is very difficult to realize how it was possible for Him to supply, to their satisfaction, the needs of so many *bhaktas* with a slender income. The plantain trees of the attached garden were taxed to their utmost in all seasons for leaves, which served the purposes of plates. Still their resources were not exhausted. Again, the flower plants and vegetables were always liberal in rendering their help, whenever approached by the *bhaktas*.

But the charity practised on so extensive a scale never affected their store. The garden would remove various wants in this way, no doubt ; but it could not minister to all the needs. This is why the shop-keepers in the market had to be approached for an abundant supply of rice, *dal*, oil, salt, coal, and other articles mostly on credit. It was amazing, indeed, that whenever the creditors would demand the payment of their debts, Thakur would readily meet their requirements. The only trouble He would often take for the purpose was to place His hand below the pillow and the sum requisite would at once be received. This mysterious behaviour of Thakur filled the observing *bhaktas* with marvel.

Infact, in a state of ecstasy Thakur would often disclose to His devoted adherents various truths about His True Self. This would serve to convey to them a well-defined idea about His omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence. Once, in an exalted mood He said, "As fire permeates a flint-stone, so do I pervade (every object of) this Universe as Consciousness." On another occasion He said, "Even a tiny ant, that moves in an impenetrable cave of the Himalayas, is within the ken of My vision. Mine is an unobstructed vision everywhere." Indeed, the incomprehensible glory and infinite greatness of Thakur were once on the holy *Mahashtami tithi* (the second day of the *Durga Puja* festival, the eighth lunar day of the light fortnight in the month of *Aswin*) revealed to the previously-mentioned devotee, Nagen Babu (Sj. Nagendranath De) of Sarisha. On the festive occasion he paid his visit to Nitya Math with the object of placing at the holy feet of Thakur the offering of flowers, leaves and so on. His object was

well-achieved. And after partaking of the holy *prosada*, he went forth into the town with a view to observe the images of the Divine Mother. However, he had an ardent desire to have a sight of Thakur for a second time. But when he came back, he was sadly disappointed to see that the door of the holy apartment had been bolted from within. So, there was no likelihood at all of his desire being fulfilled. This subjected him to overwhelming sorrow. And he laid himself down before the door in deep dejection and resolved that he would leave that place only after the achievement of his object and not before that. After a while he felt sleepy. And in that state of drowsiness he found Thakur standing beside him and heard Him say, "Your claim was to see Me twice. Wasn't it so ? Now have you seen Me ; so it behoves you to go to rest. This is the *Mahashtami tithi*. I am too busy to night, I am too busy. Do you see ?" Nagen Babu was struck with wonder and startled, and woke to see, to his sore disappointment, the door of the holy apartment still standing bolted. He stood up and began to move on. But his advance was retarded, because his feet began to reel like those of one intoxicated with an abnormal quantity of wine. So he tottered down below the *Kamini* tree in the court-yard. But all on a sudden an over-whelmingly astounding sight struck and arrested his gaze. Indeed, he marvelled to see quite clearly before him numberless images of Goddess *Durga* pervaded by Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva and also numberless temples having Thakur for their Presiding Deity ; nay wherever he turned his eyes he saw no Deity else besides Thakur. This engendered in him the firm conviction and realization that it was his *Ishta Devata*, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, that was

being worshipped on the *Mahashthami tithi* in various ways, in various forms and in various places by various devout souls. This mysterious and inconceivable sight struck him dumb and stretched him on the ground senseless. And when he came to his senses, he found that two spiritual brethren of his were calling him on to partake of the holy *prosada*.

One day Sj. Satyendranath De Sarkar of Sarisha, a disciple of Thakur, humbly submitted to Him, "I have obtained Your grace for a long time ; but I feel prompted by no inner urge to devote myself in right earnest to prayers and meditations !" At this Thakur said, "Don't worry about it ; your object shall be achieved in time. Oh ! I have done every thing for you. So, you need not take the trouble of resorting to prayers and meditations for the achievement of your supreme end." Even this assurance of security so solemnly given by Thakur did not allay Satyen Babu's worries. However, one night Satyen Babu went to bed along with the other devotees, when there prevailed in him a spontaneous, recurrent and irresistible muttering of prayers. It was accompanied with deep meditation on God. This served to excite, nay cudgel his brains violently. He made strenuous efforts for checking this ; but they were frustrated. He was then compelled to leave his bed rubbing with the hand the top of his head and moved about in the open air to be refreshed. He also sought to divert his thoughts to other things and thereby bring in a soothing sensation. But nothing could impede the spontaneous recurrence of prayers and meditations. In this state of bewilderment and restlessness did he pass the whole night. The day dawned ; but he had to wait

patiently till the door of Thakur's room was unbolted. Then did he hurry into the holy presence in an extremely agitated state of mind with the hand laid on his head. He presented the look of one afflicted with a serious malady. On seeing him, Thakur sent forth a roar of laughter and said, "What's the matter, Satyen ? How are you getting on ? How did you pass the previous night ? What sort of rest did you enjoy ?" The devotee said quite meekly and humbly, "Father, You have a definite idea of my capacity. I craved for Your grace in that way, being ignorant of the consequences that would follow. But why did You grant me what might almost addle my brains ?" So saying he flung himself at the holy feet and all the troubles at once became the things of the past, nay his brain appeared as cool as ice.

Again, one day, in the course of a conversation, the *bhaktas* said to Thakur, "Who is your *Ishta* ?" Thakur replied in sweet accents of deep love, "Oh ! I always think of you merely—I know none else besides you ; so you are My *ishtas*." Oh ! how charming this assurance of security is !

Now, the time for the celebration of another birth anniversary of Thakur drew near. Again did a vast confluence of devotees gather in the Math for taking part in the festivity. A great many of them seated themselves in Thakur's apartment. Among them there was the previously-mentioned, distinguished Brahmana of Nabadwip named Sj. Nityagopal Goswami. He had realized the greatness of the Yogacharya in more ways than one and often heard of it from many brethren. Still he felt that he had no clear understanding as to the truths about Sri

Sri Nityagopal Deva. He made up his mind to be enlightened on the point on the festive occasion. Meanwhile Thakur asked him to sing a song. So he commenced one in an inspiring tone. It was full of queries as to why He (Thakur) so strictly observed a mystery which kept His True Self veiled in a mask that scarcely dropped off. Hence it was quite difficult for the devotees to have an idea of His supremacy.

The song inspired in Thakur high feelings which found vent through a flow of tears. This was the second time that the Yogacharya was found shedding tears so copiously. Then did He open His lips and say in a plaintive voice, afflicted with sorrow, "Why do you level against Me the charge of observing mystery very strictly ? Am I given to keep My True Self concealed from you ? Am I strict ? Am I hard and severe ? Oh ! I am like a sugar-cane, which, though outwardly hard, has sweet juice and tenderness inside." So saying He wept bitterly and was lost in *samadhi*. However, the other *bhaktas* sang various other songs to awaken raptures in His swelling heart. This was continued with undiminished fervour till 2 A.M., after which the devotees, with a gesture from the Yogacharya, partook of *prosada* and then betook themselves to repose. But repose they were not destined to enjoy, inasmuch as the lingering remnants of the night were passed in discourses they addressed to one another about the glory, greatness and causeless mercy of Thakur.

However, the above remarks of Thakur rolled away even the slightest doubt that had darkened the devout Goswami's realization of the truths about the Yogacharya. And hence



SRI SRI NITYAGOPAL

(Known also as the Yogacharya Sri Srimat Abadhuta Jnanananda Deva)

there developed in him the firm belief that Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was none else other than Lord *Gouranga*. This is why when the following day Thakur sent for him, he was emotionally stirred and struck mute at the sight of the splendid Form of the *Guru*. Indeed, he stood motionless, deprived of the power to advance further. But the encouraging attitude of Thakur enabled him to step forth towards the holy feet, at which he sank overpowered with emotions. Much time passed till he came to himself. He now burst into tears and bemoaned evidently his past conduct in various ways. But Thakur allayed his griefs with words of assurance, that served to restore to him his tranquillity of mind.

Now, we feel inclined to deal here also with the fact that sometimes an *Avatarā's* (or *Mahapurusha's*) utterances (and ways) touch upon such points as are wholly incomprehensible (through being above human intelligence) so much so that even His staunch adherents can often have little clue to their real meaning ; nay they can perhaps arrive at no definite conclusions about them by even meditating upon and considering them in their different aspects and relations. And they (the adherents) are not disillusioned till those (the points) are elucidated by Him. This is well-attested by the following :

Once, as usual, Thakur was seated in His room in all the serenity of a divine majesty and radiating spirituality. The serenity of His composure was mysteriously or imperceptibly transmitted to the devotees assembled in the holy presence. But the calm, that hence reigned in the atmosphere, was violently disturbed, when Thakur was, to all appearance, highly incensed at the offence committed

by a devotee in having eaten up (of course, in ignorance) some delicacies that had been laid carefully aside for dedication to Thakur. Indeed, Thakur was even heard to curse him for this, saying, "Let thy *jeeva* (which usually means 'tongue') fall off !" This (seemingly) horrible utterance of Thakur shook the hearts of the astounded listeners violently with terror and agitation. In fact, they were at a loss to account for this mysterious behaviour of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. They were all along given to think about Thakur thus : "Thakur is infinitely removed from every degree of harshness and hard-heartedness. He entertains for His *bhaktas* the deepest possible affection ; nay He is very susceptible of the softest passions of love, pity and kindness. He is the very Ocean of compassion. Magnanimity is ingrained in His divine nature ; and they all have been drinking never-ending draughts of that bottomless fountain of magnanimity." "How is it," they evidently said to themselves, "that He cursed the devotee for the slight offence ? Ah ! how miserably that poor creature will fare in life, when his tongue shall actually fall off !" Now, the smothered sighs of and the deep, mournful but low-toned sound uttered to themselves in pain, sorrow and anguish by the *bhaktas* forced a way into His inmost heart, which overflowed with the milk of divine kindness. Indeed, He marked the storm of confusion that was raging in their minds and so looked on them with heart-felt pity. And with an all-absorbing compassion, which never let slip an act of mercy, and with a remarkable degree of tenderness, which was never deaf to their perturbation of mind, Thakur addressed the devotees and said with His usual, serene composure, now adorned with

a smile of pity, "Ah ! What is your confusion due to ? Why have you fallen such an easy prey to an extreme agitation of mind ? Oh ! You have failed to catch the real significance of My words ? What I have meant to say is, 'Let your *jeeva* i.e., *jeevattwa* (individuality or animality) fall off.' " In sooth, what was misconstrued by the devout listeners into a horrible curse was nothing but a *great benediction* solemnly pronounced upon the *bhakta* with apparent or assumed indignation and threat—a benediction, with which perhaps Thakur intended the speediest and most effective aid to his achievement of liberation from the clutches of *jeevattwa* (and hence to his attainment of final beatitude). Evidently, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva's elucidation of His utterance again conveyed to their astonished minds an idea of the bottomless well-spring of divine emotions, from which His pronouncements would be poured out ; and so it quieted the storms of fear and trepidation that had been raging in them for a while. And they naturally received the interpretation in great but glad surprise and in a devout spirit. They again realized, as is evident, that Thakur's words were always full of dignity, sublimity and wisdom, and ingrained in deep and sweet mystery and a new revelation to devout listeners. Indeed, the discourses delivered by Him would serve always to shed lustre on the hearts of all *bhaktas* and illuminate their path of duty.

From the above it is quite clear that it is impossible for an ordinary human being, however erudite he may be, to realize the full depth and meaning of an *Avatar's* (or *Mahapurusha's*)^{*} utterances. * It should also be noted,

*Foot note : The following utterances of Lord Jesus Christ, too, are to the point : "Hear Me all of you, and understand :

in this connection, that, as they challenge the discernment of even a highly talented and devout scholar to gauge always the deep and sweet mystery in which they often remain veiled, so do they defy his power of retaining them fully and reproducing them verbatim and with accuracy on a future occasion after he has heard *them* previously even with rapt attention. This is borne out by the following lines quoted from "The Gospel of Sri Ramkrishna" :

".....Master : "What did I say ?" M : "God takes upon Himself complete responsibility for one who totally depends upon Him. It is like a guardian taking charge of a minor. You also told us that at a feast a child cannot by himself find a place to eat his meals ; someone finds a place for him." Master : "*No, that is not quite to the point.* I said that the child doesn't fall if the father leads him and holds his hand.".....

".....M : "And about the Chatak bird. He will not drink anything but rain-water." And about jnanayoga

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man ; but that which cometh out of the mouth, that defileth a man'..... A little later, when they were indoors and alone, Peter ventured to ask for an explanation of the words which He (Jesus) had uttered so emphatically to the multitude. Jesus gently blamed the want of apprehension among His Apostles, but showed them, in teaching of deep significance, that man's food does but affect his material structure, and does not enter into his heart, or touch his real being ; but that "from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." (P. 157.)"

(The Life o Christ by D. Farrar.)

and bhaktiyoga." Master : "What did I say about them?" M : "As long as one is conscious of the 'jar', the ego will certainly remain. As long as one is conscious of 'I', one cannot get rid of the idea, 'I am the devotee and Thou art God'." Master : "No, it is not that ; the 'jar' doesn't disappear whether one is conscious of it or not. One cannot get rid of the 'I'. You may reason a thousand times ; still it will not go.".....M : "And that day you spoke very rightly to Ishan about flatterers. They are like vultures on a carcass. You once said that to Padmalochan also." Master : "No, to Vamandas of Ulo." (P. 590-91)."

Infact, Thakur knew quite well, we have more reasons than one to believe, that none else would be able to put verbatim the discourses He would deliver, to record them always 'in their most splendid originality, irresistible simplicity and austere, virgin purity and to gaze always into their unfathomable depths.' He also knew, as we understand, that if any body else would seek to commit His utterances to writing after having heard them even with rapt attention, the subjective inferences of the writer, nay the expression of his own views, thoughts sentiments and feelings must creep into his record as interpolations. This is why, we think, He Himself wrote out His standpoints, doctrines and experiences of and conclusions about various religious matters and truths in order that they might reach the readers in their 'virgin purity.'

XVII

THE TERMINATION OF THE GLORIOUS CAREER

"He who constantly thinketh upon Me, not thinking ever of another, of him I am easily reached, O Partha, of this ever-harmonised Yogi. (14)

Having come to Me, these Mahatmas come not again to birth, the place of pain, non-eternal ; they have gone to the highest bliss. (15)

Gita, Eighth Discourse.

"Perfect is the wisdom of the *Guru*,
and immortalizing His look.

A mere sight of Him is enough to
save mankind from sin."

A few months passed. And then the time for the performance of the *Durga pujah* in B. S. 1317 (1910) came. A great many *bhaktas* gathered in the Hooghly Math. Indeed, arrangements for extraordinarily grand festivals were made under the auspices of devotee Sj. Annanda Mohan Roychowdhury, a distinguished Zeminder of Tepa (Dt. Rangpur). The festivities were marked also with the usual celebrations. But a proposal suddenly made by Thakur for the performance of a song on the crematorium rendered dark the bright expressions of the countenance of the assembled *bhaktas*. It alarmed them and conjured all the blood from their cheeks, as it were ; since it subjected them to the agonizing apprehension that the *Guru* was thus indicating that the time for Him to take eternal

leave of them was drawing near. Hence were they smitten with intense grief. But little did they anticipate at that time that the fateful day would dawn after four months or so.

The termination of the *Durga pujah* festival was followed by the tyranny of Asiatic cholera on a *bhakta* named Sj. Manindra Nath Roy, who belonged to Jessore. The matter was immediately brought to the notice of Thakur. On hearing it, He presented a solemn look and said in a deep voice, "How foolish is it on the part of a frail, human being, a slave to the urges for defecation and urination, to indulge in uttering, 'I am the Eternal *Brahman*, I am the Perpetual Being'?" This remark was made by Thakur evidently with the object of condemning Manindra Babu's staunch, blind adherence to the *Vedanta*-standpoint even before the attainment of Self-knowledge or the realization of the Perpetual *Brahman*-Self. But His heart melted and bled at the suffering of the devotee. So, He burst into tears and prayed fervently to the Supreme Mother of the Universe, saying with ardour and a perplexed mind, "O Mother, My Manindra is the only son of his mother! Save him from the imminent danger!" But the fell disease, to which Manindra Babu had fallen a victim, took a more serious turn. In fact, it violently affected his eye-sight even. The experienced physician, Sj. Chandicharan Babu, another disciple of Thakur, who had been appointed for administering remedies, gave up all hopes of his recovery. Thakur realized that Sj. Chandicharan was foiled in his efforts for curbing the disease and so he was unwilling to proceed further. However, to bring within the domain of probability for the sake of His

devotees what human contrivance would fail to achieve was a prominent feature of His love for them. This was well-attested, in this case, too, by the steps now taken by Him. When the previously-mentioned doctor failed to cripple the disease, Thakur exhorted his compounder, Sj. Baroda, who, too, was a disciple of Thakur, to apply Homeopathic medicines to the patient. Indeed, to their utter surprise, Baroda Babu's treatment worked a miracle, inasmuch as the patient, who had shown signs of succumbing to the disease, was perfectly cured within a short while. But the *bhaktas* realized that Manindra Babu's miraculous deliverance from the clutches of cholera was due not to Baroda Babu's efficiency in medical treatment but to the grace of the Omnipotent Thakur. They pondered over this matter with deep and reverential admiration. This wonderful event rolled away all darkness from Manindra Babu's understanding. Hence could he develop an idea of the infinite greatness of Thakur and of the full depth and significance, nay glory of His doctrine.

"When storms of sin and sorrow beat,
 Lead me to this Divine retreat ;
 Thy perfect righteousness.....
 My Rock, my Fortress, and my God."

Not long afterwards there appeared in Nitya Math a gentleman, who was quite unknown to the most of the assembled devotees. He seemed to be absent-minded, nay off his head ; since sometimes he prattled to himself and sometimes, casting his glances on the trees, appeared to talk to them. But his arrival at the Math was immediately followed by his expression of an irresistible desire for being admitted into the holy presence of Thakur. The

devotees informed him that the door of Thakur's room would be opened by the evening. At this he kept quiet for a while, but afterwards said again and again, "When will the door be opened? Is not the time yet come?" Thus did he every now and then indicate by his gestures that he had grown impatient to have an immediate sight of Thakur. Now, this strange behaviour rendered the bhaktas inquisitive about his identity being revealed to them or having any inkling into his true self. On enquiry, they learnt that he was a highly educated man named Sj. Bhupati Bhushan Mukhopadhyay and hailed from Calcutta. He was a distinguished adherent of Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva but devotedly attached to Thakur. However, the devotees felt it necessary to divert his mind to other matters from his unquenchable thirst for seeing Thakur. So, one of them said to him, "Sir, you have seen both Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva and our Thakur, nay enjoyed their society for a long time. Would you, please, give us your impressions about Both of Them?" At this Bhupati Babu kept silent for a while. He seemed to call his mind down from a high region of the domain of contemplation in order to prepare it for answering that question. Then did he say, "Sirs, you abide in the bottomless sea. Why do you yearn for *gospad* (a hole made by a cow's foot-print)?" So saying he was again lost in deep meditation. Hence did the *bhaktas* infer definitely that Bhupati Babu had reached a very high stage of spiritual advancement; and although he wore the garb of a house-holder, he was quite indifferent to the world and would pass his days in a state of absorption in divine contemplation and bliss. In the course of their

conversation with him it transpired that he had long been prevented by circumstances from feasting his eyes on the hallowed, lotus-feet of Thakur ; he happened to learn from Jnan Babu, the grandson of the Raja of Kankina (in Rangpur), the present address of Thakur and so came to seek an interview with Him. However, when the door of Thakur's room was unbolted, he humbly bent his steps towards it. And on being ushered into the holy presence, he flung himself at the holy feet with eager impetuosity and deep reverence. His very attitude of passionate humility indicated that he 'felt the haunting spell of that holy presence, of that holy voice and of Thakur's divine and illuminating message'. However, Bhupati Babu's remarkable salutation, a glowing illustration of his prostrated piety, was followed by Thakur's earnest enquiry as to the *bhakta*'s well-being. And evidently when He understood that he was in a good state of health, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva said, "Bhupati Babu, are you still accustomed to sing ?" The devotee said in an attitude of self-renouncing devotion, "Yes, my Lord ; if You deign to command me, I can sing." Thakur said, "If it be convenient, let us be entertained with a song." 'Ah ! the calm and the charm and the influence of His utterance were irresistible !' And so, emotionally stirred to the depth of his being, Bhupati Babu began a song. This was immediately followed by Thakur's absorption in *samadhi*. Bhupati Babu, too, had to stop singing, his voice being choked with an accession of overpowering emotions. But he could not resist the impulse to keep gazing at Thakur and bow low to him repeatedly with deep devotion. Thus did they pass a long time, when Thakur

came to His senses and again asked the devotee to sing. This time too the same scene prevailed and filled the on-lookers with deep, reverential admiration. In this way three hours elapsed. Now did Bhupati Babu call to mind the fact that some urgent piece of business made it incumbent upon him to try to catch the 10 o'clock train. He was now at a loss to see and decide what he should do. On the one hand, his extreme attachment for Thakur exhorted him not to leave the holy presence ; on the other, his strong sense of duty urged him to avail himself of the aforesaid train. After due deliberation, however, he felt it advisable to take his leave. Still he could not prepare his mind for departure. At last he directed his unwilling steps towards the station with tearful eyes. After he had left the Math, a bhakta said to Thakur, "He seems to be subject to insane freaks." At this Thakur remarked, "Oh, no, he is not a lunatic ; what seemed to you to be his his insane freak was due to an abnormal accession of divine emotions."*

*After the termination of Thakur's earthly career, Bhupati Babu would often go to Kalight Mahanirvan Math along with his disciples to pay his respects to "*Sri Sri Guru pith*", the holy burial of Thakur. Oh ! how sentimentally affected he would then seem to be ! In the depth and spontaneity of his emotion he would again again enter into the temple and bow low to Thakur. In fact, repeated obeisances would not allay his unquenchable thirst for showing his respects to Him. Bhupati Babu would now and then say to his disciples, "If you have a yearning after liberation, do only two things, (i) bow low to *Sri Sri Gurupith* i.e., to Thakur and (ii) partake with deep reverence of the holy food offered to Him. You shall have to do nothing else for the achievement of your object. Every particle of dust of this Math abounds in liberation !"

Now, it has already been indicated that Thakur attracted His 'own men' from various quarters. Among them mention should be made of the members of the distinguished Nag family of Jeerut, a village in the district of Hooghly. There was a time when their prosperity was at its height. This is why they would celebrate the *Durga Puja* festival with pomp and show. But in course of time untoward circumstances affected their prosperity. This necessitated the diminution of the usual expenses on the festive occasion.

However, there obtained in the family a time-honoured custom of sacrificing he-goats during the festival. When their affluence was on the wane, they thought of putting a stop to the observance of the custom in view of the extreme expenses it entailed. But they felt it incumbent upon them to obtain permission from Thakur for discontinuing the usage. And so they craved for the permission of Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva. Now, we have already referred to the fact that, being the Preacher of the all-embracing doctrine of the Universal Religion, the

Now, whenever Bhupati Babu would visit Kalighat Mahanirvan Math, his conduct and behaviour would arrest the attention of the *bhaktas*. And often would they hold talks with him. In the course of a conversation once he said, "Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva was my '*Guru Deva*' and Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was my '*Ishta Deva*'. On the eve of the termination of His earthly career Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva presented me to my Divine Husband, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva." Again, while describing to his disciples the events of his life, he said to them, "Sri Sri Paramahamsa Deva made me realize how great Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva was." Now, this Bhupati Babu was well-known as '*brother Bhupati*' to the devotees.

Samanvayacharya Thakur was given to recognize the claims of all the rites, ceremonies and practices enjoined by the Aryan Scriptures. So, He said, "It is the bounden duty of the descendants to respect and observe the customs and usages introduced and honoured by their fore-fathers ; the transgression thereof shall be followed by unhappy consequences, nay beget sin. So, you shall have to sacrifice at least one he-goat during the *Sandhi Pujah* (a special worship of the Goddess *Durga* at the beginning of the ninth lunation during the *Aswin* festival)." With due deference to this injunction of Thakur, the family have been carrying out this mandate. It should be noted, in this connection that two devout, noble members of the previously-mentioned Nag family betook themselves to the blessed life of renunciation immediately after being initiated by Thakur. They are known as Srimat Swami Hari smaranananda Abadhuta and Srimat Swami Shyamsundarananda Abadhuta. This latter has founded in honour of Thakur Nalhati Mahanirvan Math in the district of Birbhum.

Henceforward Thakur consigned Himself to a degree of seclusion that rendered Him rarely visible. Often would He remain absorbed in *samadhi*, listening to *kirtanas*. It was at such a time that Pandit Sj. Dasarathi Vedanta-sastri, Vedantabhusan, Kavya-Vyakaran-Smrityeertha composed an inspiring hymn about Thakur after a realization of His Lordly powers—a hymn that conveys to a devout reader a well-defined idea regarding the greatness of the *Guru*.

As already indicated, the extreme attachment of Thakur for a life of righteousness and austerity coupled

with His abnormal participation in *kirttanas* and other kindred acts, led to a horrible violation of the simplest rules of health. This told upon it so much so that it began to break down. Indeed, neither would He take care of it nor would He suffer the *bhakta*s to minister to its needs. He assigned to Himself a damp, ill-ventilated room, and a mat spread, upon His bedstead served the usual purpose of bedding. These as well as His pillow were the haunts of bugs. Never would He take steps for their removal. Rather a *bhakta* incurred His displeasure by killing once those that had taken up their abode in His pillow. Indeed, Thakur went so far as to decline to use the same. This degree of generosity characterised His treatment also towards mosquitoes, which infested the Math. They were suffered to prey upon Him without fear or control.

Indeed, sitting was the usual posture of repose often adopted by Thakur. As a result, a toe in the extremity of His right foot was affected with a corn, which again developed into a sore. But far from applying any remedy to it, He rather allowed bugs and ants to take up their quarters in the same quite safely. Again, cockroaches made inroads upon it. Never would He resist them. And He would be vehement against any devotee, who would seek to remove these pests. The sight, however, would pain the *bhakta*s greatly. And so if any of them would volunteer to apply a remedy to the affected part of the holy foot, His desire would, in no way, be fulfilled.

Verily, Thakur's love for His *bhakta*s admits of no comparison. Not to speak of delicacies, He would not take even very simple articles of food without having them distributed

among the devotees. Does it not attest His unparalleled love for His adherents ? Indeed, although the feeling would manifest itself in manifold aspects, still He was not satisfied with the degree of affection He bore towards them. This is why once, on the eve of His eternal separation from the *bhaktas*, He burst into tears, saying, "Oh ! you love Me so much ! But alas ! I have not been able to requite it !"

Now, it has already been indicated that Thakur, during His residence at Nabadwip, miraculously delivered His disciple, Sj. Nabin, from the clutches of the most horrible type of diabetes and invited it to reside quite safe in His body. It lived and developed there unobstructed and in course of time assumed threatening proportions, inasmuch as it begot a deadly abscess ; this, too, was suffered to tyrannize over Him uninterrupted. Never did Thakur take care to bring this matter to the notice of the devotees. However, one of the disciples somehow or other came to know of it and drew the pointed attention of the other *bhaktas* to the danger to which the abscess had already exposed Thakur. The communication startled them. It subjected them to the most agitating sense of self-reproach that they had not at all been faithful to their duty towards Thakur. Among the assembled devotees there were two experienced and eminent physicians. They examined the abscess very carefully and remarked, in alarm and anguish, that it had taken the most serious turn. They humbly suggested that operation was the only means which was likely to eradicate the evil root and branch. Thakur strongly objected to this suggestion. At this devotee Raj Kumar Babu burst into

tears and said, "Thakur, that body is absolutely our possession ; why do You want to waste so carelessly what belongs to us and not to You ?" This pathetic appeal of the devotee melted the generous, tender and compassionate heart of Thakur. He, too, wept. This heart-rending sight exerted an over-whelming influence on the assembled devotees. They also felt emotionally stirred and shed tears of sorrow.

However, the appeal of the devotee produced the desired effect and Thakur agreed to the proposal for operation. But when the *bhaktas* wanted to engage the most distinguished surgeon of Calcutta, He declined to comply with their wish and said, "Let Yajneswar and Satis operate." In fact, Thakur liked to be medically treated by the devotees alone. But to Yajneswar Babu, who deeply revered Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva as the Supreme, Perpetual Being and his Favourite, Chosen Deity, the very idea of thrusting a knife into the holy, lovely body of Thakur appeared quite revolting ; nay it gave a rude shock to his sentiments and unnerved him. But at the same time he was very anxious to adopt measures that would alleviate the excruciating pain which had been oppressing his *Ishta Devata*. So, at last he was driven to the decision of performing the extremely painful task. However, he said to Thakur in deep reverence, "This is a very serious case. The operation will be impossible of performance without the application of chloroform." Then Thakur said with a smile, "I shall sit still ; you just do your work ; I won't disturb you at all nor feel disturbed in the least." But, in view of the seriousness of the case, the devotees did not feel it at all advisable and reasonable to proceed with the

task without the resort to chloroform. So, they ardently craved for His permission for embarking upon the course of action humbly suggested by them. It was then readily given. But, to their infinite surprise, all their efforts for stifling His consciousness, were frustrated. Hence, at last they were compelled to perform the operation while Thakur remained wide awake. At this time Thakur remarked with emotion, "Such is the plight to which the body is reduced ! Ah ! what a blunder people make in priding themselves on this frail thing ! Oh ! their extreme attachment for this transitory object has rendered them forgetful of the Perpetual Being !" However, the operation was performed. And when every thing was done, Thakur said with a smile, "An artery has been cut off." This utterance of Thakur was followed by a wail of anguish that rose from the assembled devotees. They realized the gravity of the situation. They apprehended the loss of the 'Sole Treasure of their heart.'

It goes without saying that the operation failed to produce the desired effect ; nay hence did Thakur's health develop the most alarming symptoms ; it foreboded a coming evil. This brought in the minds of the devotees a dark cloud of despair coupled with despondency. However, some unaccountable malady seemed to prey on Thakur. And He appeared to try to alleviate the suffering caused by it by drinking water repeatedly. And the more He drank water the more He vomited. At this a devotee asked, "Why are You thus vomiting ?" Thakur said, "I am thus cleaning My system from within." He now did not hide from His devoted adherents the most unpleasant truth that the time for the termination of His earthly career was

drawing near. And so He instructed them on how and where His sacred body should be interred. This startling intimation subjected them to inexpressible sorrow, nay struck them dumb. But they left no stone unturned in ministering to His needs and comforts. Indeed, they remained devoted to the task with untiring zeal and energy.

Ah ! at last dawned the fateful day (Saturday, the 7th *Magh*, 1317 B. S., 1911 A. D.) in the cold season—the day, which, in spite of its unclouded splendour, threatened to rob the *bhaktas* of their 'Treasure'. Nature seemed to the devotees to present a sad look. Wherever they turned their eyes they saw nothing but melancholy in all her gloomy aspects. On that day Thakur was lying on His bedstead. And the devotees, who had passed many a happy and glorious day in the company of their Object of supreme devotion and love, stood round Him with tearful eyes. The joy, that would usually reign in their countenance in the holy presence of Thakur, was now usurped by the pallor of death, as it were. Indeed, grief sat heavy on their brow. Theirs was a sorrow that admitted of no consolation. Thakur was baffled in His efforts for allaying it even with very sweet words, when many of them clasped the holy feet and wept bitterly. In the course of the speech He addressed to them, He said, "Oh ! I came to love you ! But I have been ended in doing so ! I remain ever indebted to you for all the love you have borne to Me ! Indeed, these (the devotees) are the objects of great love to Me !" Ah ! the devotees were dearer to the *Guru* than His very life. Their concern was a subject of intense anxiety to Him. How eagerly did He desire their welfare ! Is there any

thing to which His mercy to His *bhaktas* can be compared ?

Really, His eyes swam in tears when He regretted His inability to bear the pang of His separation from the disciples. Again, the thought that He would depart for good without bidding farewell to (or rather without the permission of) the devoted companions of the days He had passed on earth, caused Him much pain. Devotee Yajneswar Babu realized this and so he said within himself, "My Lord, You may go, if You please. We give You the permission". No sooner had he said so than the Omniscient Thakur heaved a sigh of relief. After a while He said with outstretched hands, "There comes the Sun-God ; open the door. There comes "*Ganga*" who dwells in heaven". With the last words He laid hold on the vessel of *Ganga* (the holy water of the Ganga) standing by.

Now, the overwhelming grief, that preyed on the devotees, rendered them forgetful even of the indispensable duty to supply food to Thakur, although everything requisite for His entertainment stood ready to be served. However, they were completely disconcerted, when Thakur said, "Oh ! Why have you not dedicated any article of food to *Nityagopal* ?" The devotees promptly offered Him the food they had prepared for Him ; but they received the speech as a hint that Thakur stressed thereby the indispensable necessity of making a regular arrangement for His daily *bhoga* (offering of dressed food to Him) even after the cessation of His life on earth.

However, the termination of the glorious career was preceded by the pronouncement, "Awake ! Awake ! Rema-

in awake (or watchful)! Do not remain overwhelmed with the sleep of delusion! The world is a horrible place!" Indeed, the sad event occurred at 10-5 P. M.* On the eve of His absorption in eternal sleep Thakur placed His head on His right hand, which was, to some extent, suffused with indigo colour and the palm of which was fashioned into the shape of the hood of a serpent.[†]

*Towards the close of the night Chuni Babu, a personal friend of Hari Babu, a well-known devotee of Thakur, had his gaze suddenly arrested by a bright light in the sky. It pervaded a wide expanse and was adorned with a splendid, celestial car. On each side of (but a little apart from) the huge structure, there stood in the air a celestial nymph. Each held in her hand a garland of flowers. The car then descended and took its stand beside Nitya Math. After a while, however, it went upwards along with Thakur after crushing with its wheels a host of arums in the north-western side of the Math. Chuni Babu felt deeply moved and touched, and hurried to the Math with his wondrous story and related the same to the devotees. They instantly flocked out of the Math at his words to the spot pointed out by him. They saw, to their utter surprise, that the above-mentioned arums lay bruised and crushed evidently as a result of their having been run over by a car. They also noticed two garlands of white flowers lying thereon. Now it goes without saying that those were the garlands that Chuni Babu had found hanging in the hands of the nymphs. The mysterious incident subjected the observers to impetuous amazement.

[†]This is technically represented as "Ananta Sayya." The palm of Thakur's hand resembled the hood of the Serpent-chief of the netheer world called "Ananta Dera." And as Thakur placed His head thereon, it served the purpose of His bed. This is why Thakur's 'repose or lying down' on 'it' was construed as or resembled His 'repose or lying down' on the "Serpent Ananta as His bed"; this is also called Lord Vishnu's bed, the endless bed. So 'Ananta Sayya' means 'Lord Vishnu's bed, the Serpent Ananta as His bed, the endless bed'.

Ah ! The much-dreaded calamity befell the devotees at last ! It robbed them of the 'Supreme Prop' and hence of all the joys and comforts of life. Really, to the devotees the incident was a bolt from the blue. Never had they dreamt even that Thakur, who loved them so much, would suffer them to be thus oppressed with the over-powering grief of eternal separation from Him ! No imagination, however rich, gifted and prolific, can delineate a picture of the sad plight to which the termination of His earthly career reduced them. Indeed, the very idea of separation from Thakur would swell in their hearts surges of ebullition of grief. So, was it possible for them to remain undisturbed in mind after losing the 'Dearly Beloved Gem of the heart' ? In fact, the very sight of the captivating expression of His exquisitely beautiful face would, in a moment, render them quite oblivious of all their sufferings, sorrows, agony and anguish, and thrill them with inexpressible delight ! They were overcome with the reflection that they would no more be able to enjoy the super-earthly loveliness of Thakur's luminous form ; indeed, under the surpassing influence of that divine loveliness the splendour and beauty of all the fascinating objects of the world would, in their estimation, pale into insignificance. They now recalled the happy periods of life, during which they had enjoyed, in a remarkable degree, the affection and loving care of Thakur. They now recalled the 'miracles of Thakur, the accidental signs, nay the glowing evidences and illustrations of His infinite spiritual wealth and Lordly Powers ; these (the miracles) were addressed not only to inalienable loyalty and loving and humble faith but also to designing malice without any blaze.'

of adventitious glorification.' The sweet, nectareous words of a deep, immortal significance, that Thakur would often utter to them with the loving accents of compassion, began to ring in their ears now. The smiles and loud laugh, that would sparkle on the earth-fascinating countenance of Thakur, seemed to play like lightning before their eyes ; really, 'His radiant smiles and laughter would breathe forth the irresistible charm of divine purity.' The *bhaktas* also vividly recollected how inspiring and captivating the splendid, lovely form of Thakur would look, when He would be overwhelmed with divine emotions and absorbed in *samadhi*. They also called to mind what a charming spectacle that form would present when, dissolved into ecstasies, Thakur would dance like *Mahaprabhu Sri Sri Gouranga Deva*. These recollections and reflections subjected them to the agitated intensity of invincible grief. This is why some of them uttered very sad and solemn woe, nay screams, groans and cries of deep distress ; some weltered on the ground ; some stood stock-still absorbed in sorrow and some became benumbed with it ; some clung fast to the holy feet and bathed them with tears ; some writhed and then lay unconscious on the floor. Again, some of the *bhaktas* sought to allay their bereavement by performing *kirtanas* with deep devotion.

Ah ! the holy 'Nitya Math', the abode of undiminishing bliss and peace, the eternal source of joy to the *bhaktas*, where the things of beauty and sublimity would exalt their minds, became widowed of its loveliness and grandeur ! It, too, wore the gloomy look of a bereaved soul. The smiling trees, plants and creepers of the garden, that had been entertaining the *bhaktas* with the splendour of their rich

foliage, enchanting florescence and lovely flowers, seemed to hang down their heads, overcome with grief. The bees seemed to refrain from singing and culling honey from the flowers. The birds seemed too depressed to feel inclined to amuse the inmates of the Math with their melodious notes. In short, nature, with all her animate and inanimate objects, presented a very sad spectacle ; verily, 'she seemed burning with a bereavement, the horribleness of which none but the aggrieved *bhaktas* could even conceive in their loftiest dreams' ?

However, while, in one quarter of the Math, loud wailings rent the sky, in another the atmosphere was kept reverberating by *kirtanas* performed by a number of devotees at the top of their voice. But the *bhaktas*, whose minds were ardent as flames and clear as crystal, did not fail to discharge the offices of devotion to duty towards the sacred body of Thakur. So, quite reverently and tenderly did they lay it in a wooden chest. Then was it carried in a solemn procession to the Hooghly Ghat Station. There it was placed in a compartment of a goodstrain, which had been thoroughly washed and cleaned with the holy water of the Ganga and thus made ready for the purpose. But it should be noted in this connection that the *kirtana*, that had commenced in the Nitya Math at Hooghly, continued with unabated fervour till the work of devoutly burying the sacred body of Thakur in Mahanirvan Math at Kalighat in Calcutta drew to a conclusion. However, although nothing could soothe the passion of agitation coupled with anguish, which the *bhaktas* had been experiencing, they never swerved from their duty. Indeed, after reaching the Howrah Station, they conveyed, with deep devotion, the

holy wooden box from the train to a bullock-cart ; they laid the same on the vehicle. Then did they set themselves the arduous but high task of drawing the cart themselves with unwavering ardour. It took them a very long time to get to the desired destination. However, after they had reached the Kalighat Mahanirvan Math, the impassioned souls had the sacred body of Thakur enclosed in a coffin made of copper and interred by the solemn performance of the usual ceremonies and rituals. Thus did the *bhaktas* quite reverently carry out the mandate of Thakur.* A few years after a towering temple was constructed on the holy burial place with the help of a number of noble, generous, and devout souls. It now stands majestically beside Rash Behari Avenue and attracts a tribute of deep reverence from every religiously-minded observer. However, everything else was subsequently done in accordance with the injunctions of Thakur, which ran thus :

*The *bhaktas* had been deeply absorbed in the rush of new emotions excited by the bereavement. This coupled with their invincible zeal for doing the will of Thakur had rendered them quite regardless of the penal consequences of burying His body without the permission of the Calcutta Corporation. Indeed, the authorities of the Corporation were entitled to exact a fine of Rupees five hundred from each of the individuals taking part in the work. However, scarcely had a month expired after the termination thereof, when they (the authorities of the Corporation) brought a law-suit against the sixteen Trustees (appointed by Thakur) of Kalighat Mahanirvan Math. The news took them (the Trustees) by surprise, nay struck them dumb. Really, they were at a loss to see how they would be able to collect the large sum of Rupees eight thousand ! The matter subjected them to violently agitating anxiety. But, lo ! Thakur, who is very affectionate and gracious to His disciples, revealed Himself one night to a devotee in his dream-state and said, "In view of the honour due by you to the Corporation, pay them a fine of Rupee one." However, to the infinite surprise of the Trustees, the verdict given by the Judge required them to pay the scanty fine only !

**"A three-stepped altar should be made for the Manoharpur *Gurupith*. The back side of the topmost step should be furnished with a copper tablet, which should be inscribed all round with the *Vija-mantras* (mystical letters or syllables used as shorts for prayer formulae) of all the Gods and Goddesses with that of the Guru in the centre ; but "Om" (the sacred mystic syllable which represents the Principal Triad of the Hindus and prefaces all their prayers) should appear at the top. There should stand, on the same step, a box made of copper or brass ; it should be filled with My works. My statue and sandals should be placed on the second and the third steps respectively.

Two festivals, namely the *Guru Purnima* and My birth anniversary, should be celebrated in the *Manoharpur Ashram* (the Kalighat Mahanirvan Math) each year. But no function should be publicly held to commemorate My departure from the surface of the earth. The worship of all the Gods and Goddesses will be allowed in the *Manoharpur Guru Pith*. Every sect of the Aryans will be permitted to adore the Supreme Lord in the *Pith* (sacred place). But *Mlechchhus*, *Yavanas* and persons belonging to other low or untouchable castes or tribes should not be allowed to touch the *Pith*. They will have to offer their prayers or adore the Supreme by taking their position outside."

We have quoted only in part the pronouncements solemnly made by the Yogacharya at the last moment. Here they are recorded in full :

*These are the English renderings of the utterances of Thakur.

*“My last instructions to My disciples are : “They should (or shall or will) be bound to one another in the tie of brotherly feeling. If any one of them be overtaken by a danger, the others should (or shall or will) try to deliver him (or her) from it. They should (or shall or will) regard all the people of the world as their brothers. If they come across any helpless and distressed man, they should offer their help to him. They should not try to do harm to others. They should bear an equal amount of reverence for and faith in all the sects of all the religions.”

“Awake ! Awake ! Always remain awake (or watchful) ! The world is a horrible place !”

“My darling, whether you think (or speak) of riches or men, none is connected with any body. The love one person bears towards another is prompted by a selfish motive.”

A PROPHECY

“The Doctrine I am preaching in this Iron age (*Kali-yuga*) will again prevail in the *Satya*, *Treta*, and *Dwapara Yugas* (the first or the Golden Age, the second or the Silver Age and the third or the Brazen Age respectively). I shall *again* incarnate Myself in all those Ages.”

I bow to the Hallowed, Lotus Feet of my revered *Guru*. Jnanananda Deva, Bhagawan Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva, my Favourite and Chosen Deity.

*These are the English renderings of the utterances of Thakur.

"Be advised by the *Guru*, O thoughtless man ;
Mere intellect devoid of love has ruined many a man.
Cultivate the love of God, my friend,
And you will acquire clear thinking.
Let His lotus-feet bloom in your heart,
And all the darkness of sins gathered in the course
of lives will vanish.
Dwell on the *Name*, and spread it among others.
Whoever hears it, utters it and lives it will be saved.
It is the only true and essential thing.
Sing His praises with the poise of your mind."

Om Tat Sat !

Om ! Om !! Om !!!

Peace ! Peace !! Peace !!!

SOME PRONOUNCEMENTS OF THE YOGACHARYA*

I

"God is One. That One God has many forms, attributes, names and powers. 1.

One single God is innumerable in form and appearance and name. But He is non-distinct from all His forms and personal qualities. Indeed, all His forms, appearances and He Himself are non-distinct from one another like the grain, the skin and the stone of the fruit which, though not the same in form, appearance and name, are non-distinct from one another. 2.

Though the aggregate of the grain, the skin and the stone makes up the fruit and though those three and the fruit are non-distinct from one another, yet we say in common parlance 'the grain, the skin and the stone of the fruit.' In the same way, although the Almighty God and all His Powers are non-distinct from each other, yet we say 'all Powers of the Almighty God.' 3.

From the title *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss) of *Brahman* (the Eternal), we know that He is both the Power and the Powerful. He is the Powerful as *Sat* as well as the two Powers 'Chit and Ananda'. 4.

The same idea sounds different in different languages. But one who knows all the languages will see the one idea through the different sounds. There are varieties of religious practices according to the varieties of tenets. But the result is one. So you see various Forms of God. But they are One in Knowledge. 5.

The same Alphabetic sound '*Ka*' is represented differently in *Devanagari* and Bengali. In the same way, *Shiva* and *Krishna* are different in personal quality (form or appearance) but absolutely without difference in essence (reality). 6.

*Translated from some of the writings of the Yogacharya.

In many *Sakta* works (works treating of the Divinity as the Goddess or Goddesses of Energy), *Shiva* has been called *Iswara* (the Ruler of the Universe). In many *Vaishnava* works (works treating of *Vishnu* and His different Manifestations and Incarnations), *Krishna* has been called *Iswara*. According to the various religious authorities of the world, God is not more than One. *Shiva* and *Krishna* should, therefore, be called non-distinct from (identical with) Each Other. 7.

SreeKrishna is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss), that includes *Chit*. *Chit* is the same as *Yoga-Maya* (the Subtle Power of Union). And *Yoga-Maya* is no other than *Kali* (the Goddess of Energy). Therefore, *Kali* and *Krishna* are non-distinct from Each Other. 8.

In the eighth chapter of the *Aranya Kanda* of the *Adhyatma Ramayana*, *Sree Rama* has, in the hymns of *Jatayu*, been described as 'Giribaradharinamihitabhiramam' (the Holder of the great mountain, the Desired and Beautiful Object), which means 'the Holder of the mountain called the *Gobardhana*', Who is *SreeKrishna*. Therefore, according to that portion of the line, *Rama* and *Krishna* are non-distinct from Each Other. 9.

From the part 'Chidanandarupah *Shivohang*, *Shivohang* (I am *Shiva*, Who is essentially Knowledge and Bliss)' of the line in the '*Nirvanashatka*', we understand that *Shiva* is both '*Chit*' and '*Ananda*'. So, *Chit-Kali* (Knowledge-*Kali* or the Conscious *Kali*) and *Radha-Ananda* (*Radha*-Bliss) both are *Shiva*. Do not think these Three to be different (from One Another). 10.

Visweswara (the Lord of the Universe) is One. In the second chapter of the first part of the *Vishnupurana*, *Vishnu* has been called 'Visweswaro Harih (the Lord of the Universe, Hari)'. According to the *Purana*, *Kashi-Khanda*, *Shiva* is *Visweswara*. So, *Shiva* and *Vishnu* are non-distinct from Each Other. 11.

In the hymn contained in the eighth chapter of the fourth *ratra* of 'Naradapancharatra' addressed to *Bala-Gopala*, He has been called 'Jagat-*Shiva* (the world-*Shiva*)'. In the *Vishnupurana* *Vishnu* has been called 'Jagat-*Vishnu* (the world-*Vishnu*)'. 12.

According to the *Sreemat Bhagavata*, *Rukmini*, Who was an Incarnation of *Lakshmi*, worshipped *Shiva* and *Ambica* (the Goddess *Durga*). One, who is a true devotee of *Vishnu*, cannot show irreverence for *Shiva* and *Sakti* (the Goddess of Energy). 13.

According to the *Mahabharata*, *Mrityunjaya* (the God *Shiva*) Himself has become *Radha* born of the milkman's class. According to *Naradapancharatra*, *Narada* himself, who was *Brahmarshi* (a Brahmin sage), partook of the remains of the food already tasted by that Milkmaid. And every reverent person worships that *Radha*. The remainder of the food already tasted by God and His devotees, even when born very low, is most respectfully accepted. 14.

If, according to *Mahabharata*, it is admitted that *Samkara* (the God *Shiva*) Himself has become *Radha*, then *Shiva* is an Object of reverence to a devotee of *Radha*, and *Radha* to a devotee of *Shiva*. 15.

In some *Puranas* 'ap' (water) has been called *Narayana* (the Divinity). *Ganga*, too, is 'ap' (water). So, She, too, is *Narayana*. *Ganga* is *Narayana* in a feminine Form. *Ganga* is *Narayana Brahman* (the *Ganga* is the Divinity and the Absolute). 16.

In Sanskrit the word 'Sat' may also mean 'good'. *Brahman* (the Absolute) is called 'Sat'. In English the word 'God' denoting 'Lord' has come from the word 'good'. Both 'good' and 'Sat' mean 'excellent'. Therefore, 'good' and 'Sat' are identical. Also 'God' and 'Sat-Brahman' (the Existential, Eternal, Supreme Being) are identical (non-distinct from Each Other). 17.

In the *Madhya Khanda* (the middle part) of the *Chaitanya Bhagavata* it is stated—'Adyasaktirupe nache Prabhu GourSingha (the Lord *Gaur*, the Lion, danced in the Form of the Chief or Original *Sakti*, the Goddess of Energy).' *Adya Sakti* (the Chief or Original *Sakti*) is not more than One. It is not possible that the *Vaishnavas* have one *Adya Sakti* and the *Saktas* (the worshippers of *Sakti* or the Goddess of Energy) quite Another. 18.

One single *Sakti* (or Energy) may become many while keeping Herself whole and entire at the same time. Compare the *Sakti* with lamp-light which remains full and entire, even though many lamps are kindled from it. 19.

Brahman (the Absolute) has been called *Vishnu* in the *Vishnu-Purana*, *Shiva* in the works treating of *Shiva*, *Sakti* in the *Mahabagavata* and *Krishna* in the *Srimat Bhagavata* and the *Brahmavaivartta* and also in various other works dealing with various tenets the One *Brahman* has been variously named. He, who has attained true knowledge about *Brahman*, has reached the knowledge of non-distinction or identicality. And he realizes *Vishnu* of the *Vishnu-Purana*, *Shiva* of the works dealing with Him (*Shiva*), *Sakti* of the *Mahabagavata* and *Krishna* of the *Sreemad Bhagavata* to be all non-distinct (identical). 20.

According to the *Devi-Bhagavata*, *Krishna* and *Kali* are non-distinct. In the *Bhagavat Geeta* we find that *SreeKrishna* assumed the Form of *Kala*. In various places in the *Adhyatma-Ramayana* *Sree Ramachandra* and *Sita* have respectively been called *Kala* (the God *Shiva*) and *Kali* (the *Sakti*, the Goddess of Energy). The *Adbhuta-Ramayana* too speaks of *Sita's* becoming *Kali*. *Kala* is none other than *Shiva* and *Kali* than *Bhagavati* (Goddess possessed of the divine attributes and powers). Do not think *Rama*, *Krishna* and *Shiva* to be different (from One Another). Do not think *Sita* and Goddess *Kali* to be different (from Each Other). According to the *Skanda-Purana*, *Shiva* Himself became *Rama*. In the *Naradapancharatra* there is no distinction between *Radha* and *Durga*. The *Mundamala Tantra* describes *Mahamaya* (the Goddess *Durga*) as *Hari-Haratmika Vidya Brahma-Vishnu-Shivatmika* (being essentially *Hari*, *Hara* and Knowledge Herself and being essentially *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*). And *Mahamaya* is only another name for *Bhagavati*, the Goddess. 21.

There is a variety of men. Each man has a distinct taste and inclination. Various men find taste and pleasure in various foods, various dresses and various conversations. Even each man is found to possess distinction in each matter. Also the religious propensities

of men are not the same in kind. It is for this reason that various religious opinions of various sages have come into existence, and various religious authorities have been formed. It is for the same reason that God too has assumed various Forms. There is a variety in His embodiment and unity in His non-embodiment. In the state of spiritual perfection the various Embodied Forms of God are realized and seen as One. The seeing and realization of this manner may be styled non-dual knowledge in the Embodied. In the state of supreme perfection (*mahasiddhabastha*, that is, perfection par-excellence) one acquires the knowledge of the non-distinction of the Embodied and the non-Embodied. Knowledge of this plane is very rare. 22.

Eatables are various; but appetite is one. Each kind of eatable is sufficient to satisfy one's appetite. Religious authorities are many, and opinions various; but God is One. Each of the opinions (or tenets) lead but to Him. 28.

Samkaracharya while addressing a hymn to *Veda Vyasa* has called Him '*Adbhuta Krishna* (the Singular or Wonderful *Krishna*)'. And *Vyasa* has called Him '*Adbhuta Shiva* (the Singular or Wonderful *Shiva*)'. *Samkara* is an Incarnation of *Parana Shiva* (Supreme *Shiva*), and therefore, He has been called *Adbhuta Shiva*. His *Sakti* (Energy or Goddess of Energy) is *Parvati* (the Goddess *Durga*), the *Brahma-Vidya* (the Knowledge of the Absolute). 24.

Both the *Shaiva* and the *Vaishnava* sects have *mohantas* (lit. men whose ignorance or illusion has been dispelled, here, religious heads). The *mohanta* of *Tarakanatha* is a *Shaiva*. There were sixty-four *mohantas* in the *Vaishnava* community introduced by *SreeChaitanya*. The principal persons in the *mathas* (monasteries) of those, who hold the doctrine of (monotheism or unitarianism or) non-duality in religion, are the same as the *mohanta*. 25.

Sometimes a person laughs and sometimes he cries. But laughing and crying are opposed to each other. If these two be possible in the same person, then why would not the doctrine of duality and non-duality be possible in the same individual? 26.

The Mahomedans put *hajat* and various articles of offering before the *Darga* of *Khoda*. The *Aryya* too puts the articles of offering before the various Images of God. 27.

As God Himself killed several *Rakshasas* (demons), that were opposed both to Gods and religion, in His Incarnation as *Rama*; as God Himself killed *Kangsa* and several other *Asuras* (giants) in His Incarnation as *Krishna*; as God Himself carried on the process of extirpation of the *Kshatriya* tribe all over the world as many times as twenty one in His Incarnation as *Parasurama*; as God Himself killed *Hiranyaksha* in His Incarnation as the Boar; as God Himself killed *Hiranyakashipu* in His Incarnation as the Human-Lion; as God Himself killed *Madhukaitava* in the Form of *Vishnu*; as God Himself killed *Tripurasura* and other turbulent demons in the Form of *Shiva*; as God Himself, in the same Form of *Shiva*, destroyed the well-known sacrifice of *Daksha*; as God Himself, in the Form of *Durga*, killed *Durgasura*; as God Himself, in the Forms of various *Saktis* (the Goddesses of Energy), killed many demons; in the very same way, the noble-souled *Mahammud*, the Servant and Prophet of God, in accordance with the commandment of God Himself, ordered His own people (followers) to wage wars with the non-believers according to place, time and object, for their self-preservation, for the defence of the life and religion of the members of their community and for the maintenance of the glory of true religion. According to necessity, God does all three—creation, preservation and destruction. None other except Himself and His *Sakti* (Energy) can accomplish these three. 28.

In Bengal some women worship the cow in the religious vow called *gokala-vrata*. At the time of *Moses* some *Israelities* also worshipped the calf. 29.

The spiritual ecstatic state par-excellence comprehends all forms of *samadhi*.* Madness etc. belong to the state of *samadhi* in consciousness. An ecstatic swoon is *savikalpa samadhi* (the

*Fixation of the mind on the supreme Spirit; profound divine meditation; abstract contemplation of God; religious abstraction; act of restraining the senses and concentrating the mind in divine contemplation.

state of *samadhi* in which the mind is still active in some respects). *Nirvikalpa samadhi* (the state of *samadhi* absolutely without the activity of the mind) is a death-like state. All the ten ecstatic states of divine attitude par-excellence occurred to the Great Lord *SreeChaitanya Deva*. Therefore, it is to be acknowledged that all forms of *samadhi* too occurred to Him. 30.

II

The Spiritual Master is a soul of enlightenment. He is called *Ishta Deva* (the Deity desired). And one, who is of goodness, does never do evil. Every piece of advice (or precept) given by the Master of enlightenment is made up of enlightenment itself. Whomsoever he wishes to awaken is enlightened with his precept. And not a single piece of advice given by such a Master does evil to the disciple. Far from it, every bit of his advice does good to the disciple. I.

One who is unenlightened himself is not fit to be a Spiritual Guide ; and his precepts (instructions) do not produce knowledge either. 2.

The Great Lord *Sree Chaitanya*, while still in the household, was initiated not by the spiritual Guide of his family, who was a house-holder, but by Iswara Puri who was a Sannyasin. Every house-holder should be initiated by a worthy Sannyasin. 3.

He alone, who has got the power of initiation, which is the destroyer of all sins and giver of supreme knowledge, can give it to another who has not yet been initiated. 4.

Iron, when cold, cannot scorch your skin ; but when heated to the burning point, it becomes fire itself ; then it can burn your skin. If I have not the power of liberating your mind from the worldly attraction and if inspite of that I tell you to recount the holy formula '*Om Satchidekam Brahman* (The One Supreme Brahman is Existence and Knowledge)', it will not liberate you.

But if I can add the subtle power of the liberating spirit to the formula, then it will emancipate your mind. 5.

The liberating spirit goes by the name of *mantra*. And none except the True Master has the power of infusing it. That True Master is *Shiva* Himself. 6.

The grace, which the spiritual Master bestows on the disciple, may be otherwise styled *mantra*. 7.

The influence of the Master's power of initiation produces knowledge. And knowledge generates veneration for the Deity Desired. 8.

The spirit of initiation purifies the mind, purifies the material principles (*bhuta-suddhi*), purifies the body and purifies, in short, everything that is impure. Every one should, by all means, take refuge with the *mantra*, which is of such potency, and with the person that imparts it. 9.

If any great utterance, charged with the spirit of the Universal Spiritual Master, reaches the ear of any one, then surely he obtains the *mantra* (the saving power). 10.

By simply recounting any Name of God, charged with the liberating spirit, one can reach the state of unification or harmonisation with the Deity. The well-known *Ratnakar* became perfectly harmonised with the Divinity by recounting* simply the word '*mara*', charged with the liberating spirit. 11.

The cause of emancipation is *mantra*. 12.

The *mantra* is, as it were, the fuel and the spirit, with which it is charged, is fire ; and cooking is effected only when these two, the fuel and the fire, are united. The ordinary *Kula-Guru* (the Spiritual Guide of the family) gives only the fuel but cannot give the fire, the spirit, along with it. 13.

One cannot die by eating the plain sweetmeat ; but he surely dies, if he eats it mixed with poison. So one does not get one's mind emancipated, if one recounts the formula '*Om SatChidekam Brahman*' uncharged with the saving spirit. But the well-known Valmiki became emancipated by recounting the simple word '*mara*' which was charged with the saving spirit. 14.

You yourself are unenlightened. So you have no power to infuse the liberating spirit into anyone. We give the name *mantra* to any great utterance through the influence of which the mind is emancipated from this world of delusion. 15.

It is only the unenlightened who have a low opinion of *mantra*. But one who has got one's mind emancipated by the influence of *mantra*, which is spiritual knowledge itself, has no longer a low opinion of it. 16.

The *mantra* casts off all forms of man's bondage. So should any one give it up ? Do you not know that the *mantra* is the very knowledge of the Supreme and the spiritual knowledge itself ? It is certainly a wonderful manifestation of the grace of the great and good Spiritual Master. And can I keep myself off from the affectionate embrace of the divine power of initiation which is made up, as it were, of all goodness and the divine spirit of liberation ? Can I abandon the spirit of initiation which is a form of his grace ? 17."

III

Many are the edibles. Hunger is one. It can be allayed with each and every one of them, indeed. Many are the scriptures. Many are the tenets. God is One. He can be reached (or realized) by embracing each and every tenet. 1.

Outwardly the world looks very beautiful and charming. The sights and phenomena of the outer world can prove more attractive to the heart ; but things behind it (the outer world) cannot do so. 2.

When the coating of lime-wash and the plaster of a (brick-built) house are washed and broken off, the bricks appear and its ugly form becomes visible. The world, too, is, ~~as it were~~, a nicely-decorated house furnished with plaster and smeared with a lime-wash. Its beauty is external beauty. 3.

One does not want to remain sitting in a latrine after voiding the bowels. One does not want to live in the world after renouncing all objects of enjoyment. 4.

A clean needle, if it remains attached to a cloth for a long time, gets rusted. It cannot soon be detached from it (the cloth). So long as the needle remains clean it can be pulled off in no time. He, whose mind remains attached to the world for a long time, cannot have it (the mind) detached from it soon. 5.

So long as a leaf remains clinging to a tree, it remains lively and sappy. No sooner does it fall off from the tree than it gets dried and withered. A fruit does not lack freshness while it remains hanging on a tree. The mind of an individual remains freshened up with the juice (i.e. emotions) of love and devotion while it remains attached to the Tree of God. But the fruit of such a mind (as is full of the emotions of love and devotion), if it dwells in the world after having dropped from the Tree of God, loses its freshness. 6.

The world and whatever is connected with it all lead to dependence (on others). 7.

The dissociation of the mind from the world is liberation. Death cannot lead to liberation, unless the mind becomes dissociated from the world. Repeated deaths of an individual in a state of bondage to the world will lead not to his liberation but to his repeated births. 8.

Many boats capsize in floods. The boats of the minds of many individuals capsize in the floods of the ocean of the world. Some minds can scarcely ever survive by the grace of God. 9.

Even a very skilful swimmer is drowned, if big stones are tied to all the parts of his body. Try to cross the ocean of the world after freeing yourself from all the burdens thereof. If you be heavily laden, you will be drowned in it. 10.

Even a very fleet, spirited and vigorous horse, if bound with fetters, can no more run. You will be entitled to march on towards God, if you can set yourself free from the fetters of *Maya*. 11.

The stain left on the body by tar can be removed not with

water but with oil. *Maya* is like tar. It needs to be removed from the mind with the oil of devotion. 12.

When the thorny hair of a hairy caterpillar sticks to the body, the affected part should first be rubbed with a leaf of the fig-tree and then smeared with lime. The former process removes the hair to some extent and the latter allays the pain caused by the same (the hair). The thorny hair of the six passions of the hairy caterpillar of *Avidya-maya*¹ remains stuck in the mind ; it (the mind) should first be rubbed with the leaf of the fig-tree of discrimination. This will serve to remove the hair to some extent. Then it (the mind) should be smeared with the lime of dispassion. This will serve to enfeeble by degrees the hair (of the six passions). 13.

The kernel of a cocoanut and the inner parts of the fruits of the castor-oil plant and mustard seeds are a mixture both of watery and oily substances. If they remain exposed for a time to the rays of the sun, the watery substance is dried up ; but the oily one remains unaffected. The mind, too, of an individual is full of both sins and pieties. The rays of the sun of wisdom dry up the water of sins but do not affect the oil of pieties. 14.

Dispassion for the world and the riches thereof is sure to beget poverty ; but it yields peace, happiness and bliss. This sort of poverty is desirable ; it is the mother of freedom. 15.

The ornaments made of brass are forsaken by a woman, when she obtains those of gold ; these, too, are put aside, when ornaments made of diamond are presented to her. When happiness of a superior sort to worldly pleasure is reached, the latter is regarded as of no account. 16.

If there be no books in the residence of a scholar, he is not harmed on this account ; since he is endowed with learning. But even if the house of an illiterate man is richly furnished with books, he can attain no amount of learning. He, who is possessed of love and devotion towards God, is possessed of everything. But he, who

1. Neascience, want of divine knowledge ; ignorance ; the mistaken belief that 'the body is the ego'. 2. Illusion.

can merely utter and write out many words of piety (but lack love and devotion towards God), is a poor creature, indeed. 17.

True renunciation is impossible of acquirement so long as attachment for children, wife and so on and riches of the world is not shaken off from the mind. A man bound to such attachment, even if he lives in solitude or in the forest after assuming the garb of an all-relinquishing Sannyasin, cannot be called so. He, who behaves in that way in spite of his attachment for the world, is liable to commit a great crime and a great sin. 18.

A small quantity of fire cannot retain its existence in a large quantity of water and vice versa. But submarine fire dwells quite unaffected in the ocean. In the case of an ordinary man real devotion to righteousness or true spiritual advancement cannot prevail side by side with his occupation with an efficient discharge of his duties and responsibilities of the world. But that was not the case with great souls like Adwaita, Nityananda, Janaka, Vyasa, Vasistha, Dhruba, Prahlada, Bali, Roy Ramananda and so on. 19.

Great *Siddha purushas* (or perfected souls i.e. men who have attained divine perfection by abstraction, deep meditation and austerities) can live in the world quite unaffected like infants and little children. 20.

Little children sometimes wear clothes and sometimes remain naked. They are free in both the conditions. The conduct and behaviour of *Siddha purushas* can be likened to theirs. In all conditions they remain free from the fetters of *Maya*. 21.

Tigers and cats can see both in light and gloom. *Siddha purushas*, who are free from the fatters of *Maya*, can see Sachchidananda (Supreme Brahman, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Eternal) by their eye of divine wisdom even in the illusory world that is enveloped in the gloom of ignorance (or ne-science). They remain equally unaffected both when they come into touch with the world and when they live removed from it. Contact with the world can do them no harm. 22.

Even delicacies turn into night-soil after entering into the stomach. (After it is secreted) it emits a putrid smell and nobody likes to touch it. When it is reduced to earth, it is freed from the smell.

Still he, who knows of its previous condition, does not want to touch it. Night-soil is so loathsome to people ! Many do not like to live in the company of a man, even if he recovers his moral excellence after having lost it for a time ; many do not even come into touch with him. 23.

A tree richly stored with fruits bends (or hangs down the head). A man, who is possessed of (the fruits of) many good tendencies and virtuous inclinations, is lowly, indeed. 24.

A pond, that is covered over with water house-leek, is muddy and emits a bad smell. Pure water cannot be obtained from it, even if the water house-leek be removed. A pond of transparent water is never covered with it (water house-leek). Its contents, too, are free from the bad smell of mud. He, who is sound at the core, bears a good exterior, too. 25.

A great and noble soul, indeed, is he who is held in high esteem by most of the people, who, when beaten, does not thrash the beater, who, when scolded, does not rebuke the scolder and who, when abused, addresses no harsh words to the abuser. 26.

The master sometimes beats and scolds the servant. The latter bears these with apparent patience, since he has not the power of retaliation. It does not point to his greatness. 27.

The Vishnu Purana proclaims Vishnu to be *Brahman*, (the Eternal), the religious texts dealing with Shiva proclaim Him to be *Brahman*, Mahabhangawata proclaims *Shakti* (the Goddess of Energy) to be *Brahman*, Srimadbhangawata and Brahmapavartta proclaim Krishna to be *Brahman* and various other holy books dealing with other tenets have named the same *Brahman* variously. He, who has reached the real knowledge of *Brahman*, has developed the consciousness of non-difference or unity. He has realized that Vishnu of the Vishnu Purana, Shiva of the religious texts about Him, *Shakti* of Mahabhangawata and Krishna of Srimadbhangawata and Brahmapavartta are non-different from One Another. 28.

The Sanskrit word 'Sat' means 'good' too. *Brahman* is called 'Sat.' The English word 'God', which refers to 'the Supreme Lord,' has originated from 'good'. Both the words 'good' and 'Sat' convey

the same meaning. So 'Good' and 'Sat' are non-different from Each Other. Hence 'God' and '*Sat-Brahman*' are non-separate from Each Other. 29.

There are a great many men in this world. Every man has got his individual taste. Different men have tastes (or relish) for and take delight in different edibles, different garments and different conversations. Every man shows difference of taste in every thing (or every man is found to be differently inclined to every thing). Every man does not cherish the same religious inclination ; this has led to the development or creation of different tenets by different holy sages and of different scriptures as well. This is why the Supreme Being, too, manifests Himself in manifold forms. His 'embodiedness' is characterised by multiplicity and His 'formlessness' by unity. When an aspirant reaches perfection by abstraction, deep meditation and austerities, various forms of the Supreme Lord are realized and found to be one or non-different from one another. This sort of realization and experience can be spoken of as the knowledge of non-duality in the 'embodiedness' of the Supreme. When the aspirant reaches the state of supreme perfection, he attains the knowledge of non-difference of the 'embodied Being' from the 'Formless Being'. This sort of knowledge is very rare. 30.

Knowledge about the Self is spoken of as Self-knowledge by Me. The bliss that is born thereof can be called the bliss of Self-knowledge. 31.

Indeed, there are two substances called by the names of the 'individual self' and the 'Supreme Self.' Knowledge of duality prevails so long as they are actually known as two separate entities. But as soon as they reach the state of unity and are realized as such, the knowledge of non-duality arises. 32.

The seed is, as it were, the individual self, and the tree the Supreme Self. When the seed of the individual self will be developed (or transformed) into the tree of the Supreme Self, its name, form, qualities and characteristics will be totally changed. So in this state it should be called by the name of the Supreme.

Self and it shall then obtain the attributes, status and characteristics and so on of the same. Thus is achieved the unity (or non-distinction) of the individual self and the Supreme Self. As, although the seed and the tree are non-separate (from each other) and essentially one, still their names, forms, qualities, states and characteristics greatly differ from one another, so, although the individual self and the Supreme Self are essentially the same substance and non-distinct, still there is much difference between them. 33.

In the absence of all activities of the body and the mind, the state of being without qualities and action is reached ; but it can not be attained, if there be any sort of activity of the body and the mind. 34.

The Vedas and the Vedanta proclaim Brahman (the Eternal) to be without attributes, action and unaffected and formless. All activities of the body or the mind, such as eating and drinking and talking, point to the attributes. When *Brahmanhood* is reached, they cease. I cannot transcend the bounds of the attributes and action nor become unaffected without reaching *nirvvikalpa samadhi* (i.e. total absorption of the mind in abstract, profound, divine contemplation). He who says, "I am He." has not attained that stage. 35.

So long as I hear various sounds by the ear, see various objects by the eyes, taste and scent various things by the tongue and the nose respectively, and feel cold, heat and the pain inflicted by thrashings and blows and so on I have not reached the consciousness of non-duality. This consciousness scares away that of duality. 36.

I do not always feel griefs, sorrows and joys. So long as I feel them I am conscious of their existence. When I do not feel them, I am not conscious of their existence, too. The knowledge of the formless *Brahman*, too, develops or accrues in that way. 37.

Bhakti (devotion) is *Kamadhenu* (a fabulous cow that gives whatever is desired). *Prema* (love) is, as it were, her milk. 38.

Bhakti is ingrained in the attitude of the servant towards the master. Bhakti can be inspired by no other attitude besides the development of that of the servant towards the master. 39.

Bhakti can be developed by an individual not towards himself but towards another person. 40.

Bhakti can be attained by the grace of a *bhakta* (devotee). Krishna (God) can be reached by the grace of bhakti. 41.

A servant, who is devotedly attached to his master, feels rejoiced at serving the latter. A real servant of God, who is given to render his devout services to Him, enjoys the delight produced by them. 42.

Who else bound himself to serve Rama as devoutly and unswervingly as Lakshman, Bharat and Hanuman did? Those three alone were given to sacrifice everything and pledge their lives for the sake of their Master (or Lord). Lakshman followed Sri Rama after abandoning princely enjoyments. It is for the sake of serving Rama that He was nearly done to death by *shakti-shela* (a sort of spear or javelin or dart) and fought many deadly battles. Bharat too was not an ordinary servant of Rama. He would feel happy at the happiness and distressed at the sorrow of His Master so much so that He strictly and devoutly followed the conduct and behaviour of His Master (or Lord), when Sri Rama, after relinquishing princely luxuries, assumed the garb of and conducted Himself as a yogi. Devotion to service does not consist in merely stroking the master's body lightly with the hand. A paid servant too does so. Lakshman, Bharat and Hanuman splendidly illustrate how a really devoted servant should bind himself to serve his master in right earnest. Indeed, they were prepared to sacrifice everything, nay their lives even for the sake of their Master. 43.

Sri Ramachandra relinquished all pleasures and enjoyments and luxuries, assumed the garb of a yogi and lived and moved about in the woods in order that His father might fulfil his pledges to Kaikeyi. But His Bhakta, Bharata, renounced everything and assumed the guise of a yogi, because he bore towards his Master, Sri Ramachandra, loving devotion ingrained in the unswerving attitude and very deep feeling of noble servitude. 44.

Love is not a matter of bringing tears to the eyes or of shedding tears. A shedding of tears is caused also by griefs, sorrows, any sort of physical pain, and the eyes being oppressed with smoke and oil. Love is, indeed, an energy of the mind which prevails upon a lover to embrace his object of love and do such other things in his (the lover's) dealings with him, to attend on and serve him, to perform various works for and duties towards him, to take care of him in various ways and to treat him with kind regard and consideration. It (love) causes a lover to weep, when he is separated (or afflicted with separation) from his object of love. 45.

The origin of love is the object of love. It is sprung from the mind. It begets various attitudes, feelings, emotions and high (divine) emotions. 46.

Love is ingrained in feelings, emotions and high (divine) emotions. There develops first love ingrained in feelings and emotions and then that ingrained in high (divine) emotions. Love cannot exist without feelings and emotions or high (divine) emotions. It is full of them. 47.

Love engenders the attitude of noble servitude towards some, that of friendship towards some, that of parental love towards some, and that of sweet, wifely love (or ecstatic emotions of a sweet-heart) towards some. 48.

Love manifests itself in twofold aspects : (i) separation and (ii) union. These pervade the four previously-mentioned attitudes. The enjoyment of union in any of them begets peace. Peace abounds in bliss. 49.

Love pertaining to the world is a great bondage. The bondage of worldly love occasions pain and sorrow. 50.

A man's love for the world is diminished in proportion as his love for the Lord and His devotees is augmented. Love pertaining to the world is non-eternal and that to the Lord and His devotees is eternal. After giving up the ghost I shall have no connection whatsoever with those of the world towards whom I bear and show love by resorting to this material, physical form. But I am eternally connected with the Lord. 51.

He ,who has not drunk wine, does not fall a prey to drunkenness. Emotions and high (divine) emotions are inspired in him who enjoys the Lord. 52.

An individual bears excessive attachment for and takes great care of his life. When he sees a deadly animal at a distance, he gets frightened and leaves that spot, anticipating a coming danger. He is afraid of going on board a boat, when a little strong wind blows. A man is not afraid of dangers and difficulties, when he becomes oblivious of his soul and body. So long as he remains attached to his life, he has to remain within the jurisdiction of *Avidya-maya*. The Great Lord, Sri Gouranga Deva, would be forgetful of His Soul and body, when He would be immersed in divine emotions. 53.

Forgetfulness of the body cannot come without that of the self. Mohaprabhu (the Great Lord, Sri Gouranga) fell down into the sea from the Nilgiri in a state of self-forgetfulness. This state is impossible of attainment without great or supreme love for the Lord. It is impossible for a jeeva (individual) to reach it. Mohaprabhu was a perfect Incarnation of Lord SriKrishna. He incarnated Himself on the surface of the earth in the form of a man for imparting to *jeevas* instructions on and bestowing upon them the blessings of love and devotion. As a great scholar, if he has to teach a boy the alphabets, has to pronounce them like him (the boy), so Mohaprabhu had to play the parts of reaching various states (divine) under the influence of emotions and high (divine) emotions for the enlightenment and edification of *jeevas*. Other reasons, too, have been adduced or assigned for His assuming a new form. These will be dealt with, when necessity will arise. 54:

According to Mahabharata, Srimadbhagawata, Ananta samhita and other scriptures, Mohaprabhu Sri Chaitanya Deva was an Incarnation of SriKrishna. None of the Aryan scriptures have ascertained how many times SriKrishna will incarnate Himself. He appears on the surface of the Earth from age to age whenever it becomes necessary for Him to establish and protect *Dharma* (righteousness) for the deliverance of the righteous. This is well-attested by the

following pronouncements of the Lord recorded in Srimat Bhagawad-Geeta, the essence of all the scriptures :

"For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age." 55.

The great have to be reached through the small. The entrance to the royal mansion is not as large as the structure. The Pure-souled Guru of a limited body is, as it were, the entrance to the great Royal Mansion of Brahman (the Eternal). 56.

Humility, modesty, learning, artlessness or straightforwardness, generosity, kindness to all animals, discrimination, dispassion, wisdom, knowledge, devotion, love and other great qualities and energies manifest themselves verily in and through the material, physical form. Infact, no energy can be manifested without it. That, by resorting to which we acquire learning or wisdom and attain love and devotion, can never be despicable and insignificant. Indeed, that, from which we obtain those good qualities, is certainly extraordinary and uncommon. All trees bearing mangoes are mango-trees, no doubt; but all of them do not belong to the same class. We take greater care of the tree bearing mangoes of the Bombay variety than the one yielding sour fruits. The material structure, in which we mark extraordinariness, uncommonness and supernaturalness, is richly deserving of great care and deep reverence. 57.

The material, physical form is not parental affection ; the material, physical forms are not the parents ; how is it then that we attend on and serve them with deep affection, adore their feet and do such other acts ? If the service of and attendance on and adoration of the material, physical forms of venerable relations be desired and excellent works, those acts of devotion done to the spiritual Guide (Guru) are also right, necessary and obligatory acts. Indeed, why should not the material, physical form, by having recourse to which one is freed from the trammels of the world, be worthy of being adored and reverently served ? Verily, the material form, from which one obtains various good qualities, discrimination, dispassion, wisdom, knowledge, love for and devotion to God, extra-

ordinary degrees of compassion and which confers upon one various other great benefits, must certainly be the most estimable, venerable, respectable and adorable object. The Ruler of the Universe is known and realized to be distinctly and exceedingly well revealed and manifested from the same. 58.

The king is a man ; the scavenger, too, is a man. The former is far superior to the latter because of his influential position. Again, an erudite man is a man ; an ignorant man, too, is a man. The former is superior to the latter by virtue of his erudition. The possession of superior qualities always secures a man a superior position. If the Lord manifests Himself in a human body, it can be realized by the manifestation of extraordinary powers. 59.

Valuable articles, too, can be preserved in an earthen pot. Even now-a-days many villagers put costly ornaments inside earthen pots for fear of thieves and robbers and place the vessels thus furnished under the ground for the sake of safety. But such vessels are usually used as the containers of rice, oil, clarified butter, butter, sugar and such other eatables and drinkables and some other articles as well. Fishes, tortoises, boars and men are not generally endowed with extraordinary powers, most amazing attributes of various sorts and an uncommon capacity to achieve many very wonderful deeds. If such extraordinary traits appear in an ordinary animal, it must be taken for granted that the Lord Himself has been manifested in him. A dirty, torn piece of cloth is usually full of bad smell. But if it be perfumed with an aromatic substance, how will you deny its fragrance ? How will you deny the manifestation of the Lord in the body of a man or a woman or any other animal, if you find many uncommon, extraordinary, very amazing, superhuman and wonderful things done and various attributes, feelings, emotions and attitudes manifested by it ? 60.

Blood is changed into pus. A seed is developed into a tree. The Lord also appears on Earth as various Incarnations of His own free will. 61.

The sun and the moon do not always appear in the sky ; the Lord also does not always appear on Earth as Incarnations. The

existence of the two luminaries cannot be denied, even when they are not visible. The existence of the Lord, too, cannot be denied, even when He does not incarnate Himself on Earth. 62.

The various forms of human and other beings, in which the Lord has incarnated Himself, and the various wonderful forms, in which He, as the Unborn, Supreme, Eternal, Divine Being, has revealed, is revealing and will reveal Himself to various devotees in various ages, are all perpetual. They all remain concealed in Him ; each of them can be and is, when necessary, manifested from Him, if He has to satisfy the intense desire of a great devotee, firmly and unswervingly attached to Him. Indeed, it is Rukmini and Krishna who appeared at Dwaraka before Hanuman as Sita-Rama ; and thus was the devotee's noble object achieved. Many instances like that can be found in some Aryan scriptures. 63.

If a small quantity of sugar be stealthily mixed with a large quantity of sand and if the mixture be put before a person, he will find therein nothing but sand. Even if he knows it, he will not be able to separate the sugar from the sand and taste the sweet thing. The Lord in the form of a human being is like sugar. And His human body is, as it were, sand. None but the art of a pure devotee can recognize the Lord in it and enjoy Him. 64.

Water and oil are both liquid substances. The former quenches fire ; the latter keeps it burning. There is a gulf of difference between the Lord in the form of man and an ordinary man. 65.

The current of a river flows through it. A flood, however, overflows the banks and sweeps off even quite useless and worthless things. An ordinary *Sadhu* (a righteous man who has realized God) is, as it were, the current (of a river) and an *Avatar* (Incarnation) is, as it were, the flood. This Latter does not discriminate or distinguish between the good and the bad, the high and the low, the superior and the inferior, the sinful and the sinless, but carries all off by the flood of His causeless, supreme mercy. 66.

The world is lighted by the rays of the sun. There are no more suns than one. But there are many lights yielded by fire. None of these can illuminate the world. The sun is, as it were, an *Avatar* of the Lord. And each small light is, as it were, a *Sadhu*. 67.

Very large forms of the *Avatars* of God, who appeared as a fish, a tortoise, a boar and the lion-headed man, have been described in the scriptures. Then they (those forms) were not ordinary like the forms of those animals. So they (those forms) were wonderful both in shape and deed. If they were extraordinary both in shape and deed, how else shall we represent them, if we do not call them the Lord ? 68.

That *Chaitanya* (the Supreme Being represented as Eternal Consciousness) or the Spirit or the Holy Ghost, too, can assume a material form is well-attested by the following lines quoted from the Bible :

"And he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove,.....(St. Matthew, III. 16.)—he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him : (St. Mark, I. 10). And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him,.....(St. Luke, III. 22.)—I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove,.....(St. John, I. 32.)' 69.

We are not the 'body', but known as 'man' possessed of a 'body'. Inside the insentient river ruffled with heavy waves and inside the insentient earth, there are the sentient river and the sentient Earth. It was this sentient Earth that, tyraunized over by Ravana and other demons, communicated to *Brahmaa* her mental affliction. As ordinary men cannot see their 'selves', so they caunot see the subtle, sentient river and the (subtle, sentient) Earth. 70.

A man has taken up his lodging in a dark room ; if another man steals into the same and stays there, the former can neither know of it nor see the latter's body. In the same way, persons living in the (perpetual) darkness of ignorance, cannot see the qualified *Brahman* (the Eternal) of an eternal body, even if He appears before them. 71.

In the ocean there live various aquatic animals. They are not always visible. Only those that float on the surface come within the ken of vision. Many of them are caught in the net of a fisherman, too. Indeed, the Lord pervades the ocean of the world in

various preternatural, wonderful forms. A pure-souled fisher-man can catch some of them in the net woven of the threads of holy love and thus see them. 72.

IV

The Supreme Ruler of the Universe is One. The One has various forms, attributes, names and energies or powers. 1.

The One Supreme Lord is innumerable in forms, shapes and names. But He is non-separate from all His forms and shapes. The kernel, the skin and the stone of a fruit are not one in form, shape and name; still the three are non-separate from one another. 2.

A fruit is a collection (or is composed) of the kernel, the skin and the stone from which it is non-separate, no doubt ; but we speak of them as three separate things. In the same way, although the omnipotence of the Omnipotent Lord is non-distinct from Him, yet we represent it as the omnipotence of the Omnipotent Lord. 3.

The Lord is Omniscient and Omnipotent ; but I am not so ; since I am quite in the dark as to what will happen to me in the next moment and when I shall die nor can I do what I will. This is why I am not Omnipotent. And when I am not Omnipotent, I am not the Lord as well. 4.

True independence is impossible of achievement without omnipotence. The Lord is Omnipotent. So, He owns it. 5.

An unburnt mass of clay moulded into the shape of a brick yields, when put into water ; but when thoroughly well-burnt, it is incapable of being melted. In the same way, an immature mind gets melted, when put into the water of the world, nay it may even get mixed up with it. But that is not the case with a mature mind. 6.

A party (or a body or a community) is a prison ; a party is a cage. As one cannot get out of a prison of one's own free will, so one cannot leave (or dissociate oneself from) a party of one's own accord. As a bird confined in a cage cannot come out of it, so a man confined in the cage of a party cannot free himself from it easily. 7.

Creation is not unreal ; but it is non-eternal and subject to change. 8.

When a seed develops into a tree, it undergoes various changes. None of its altered conditions can be called unreal ; they are as real as the seed. When the maternal substance and the paternal energy combine into a body, they pass through various changes ; each of their altered conditions is real. So, because you see created objects change in various ways, you cannot call them unreal. When one object undergoes manifold changes, how can you deny that five elements have, indeed, changed into various objects ? 9.

Gloom conceals from but light reveals to our vision various things. The quality of darkness is, as it were, gloom and the quality of purity is, as it were, light. 10.

A light remains a quite undiminished whole, even if a great many lamps are lighted from it. By a similar mode of reasoning, we can say that an energy can manifest itself in manifold forms ; still it can remain an undivided whole. 11.

The *Sakti* (Energy), That taking Her position in and pervading Time, has been performing all actions, is *Kali*, indeed. Verily, that *Kali-Sakti* alone creates, sustains and destroys. That *Sakti* is Almighty. She has endless glories. 12.

If steps are taken promptly for the removal of white ants from a timber immediately after they have assailed it and if the affected parts thereof be at once smeared with tar, it (the timber) is saved. But delay in removing the pests leads to the gradual decay of the same, since, by degrees, it is reduced to earth. Bad companions are like white ants. They reduce to earth (or ruin) the timber of a man, since he becomes morally depraved by association with them. If however, before they have succeeded in bringing completely about his moral depravity, steps are taken without delay for keeping them

off and eradicating the evil influences exerted by them on his moral being and if it be at once smeared with the tar of devotion, he is not likely to be spoiled. 13.

Moles, mice and snakes cannot live in a clean room. A dark room is worthy of their habitation. Evil propensities cannot dwell in a clean mind. 14.

If the yellow myrobalan and the emblic myrobalan be cooked in water mixed with a sufficient quantity of sugar after extracting their ill-flavoured juice, they are made into very sweet confect. In the same way, if any great man cooks a sinner in the sweet liquid of devotion after extracting from him the juice of sin, he also develops an agreeably sweet character. 15.

A goldsmith can, if he wills, clear a quantity of gold, received by him, from dross. Verily, every great man can, whenever he wills, purge from sin any sinner who has taken refuge with him. 16.

So long as the roots of attachment of the tree of mind remain bound to the garden of the world, the sap of its (desire for) enjoyment does not dry up. 17.

A green wood-apple is hard and ill-flavoured. But when it is burnt, it becomes soft and tastes very nicely. The more the immature mind is burnt in the fire of wisdom, the softer it becomes. 18.

When stools are reduced to earth, they no more emit a putrid smell. When a bad man has his character rectified, his shortcomings also disappear. 19.

A labyrinth has a temple in the centre. He, who does not know the path, cannot enter into it (the temple). But he, who knows it (the path), can quite easily do so. The world, too, is a labyrinth. In the temple of *Hari*, that it is adorned or furnished with, there is the Lord. He who knows the passage leading to the same, can reach or realize Him. But he, who does not know it, (the passage) fails to do so. 20.

If you feel hungry, another person can rather supply you with the article that may appease your hunger; but he cannot create it (your hunger). The yearning for reaching or realizing God must be had by you. Another person cannot develop it in you. 21.

We offer lip-prayers only for reaching the Lord. But we inwardly pray (or our minds crave intensely) for various worldly objects. So, our heart-felt prayer is granted, indeed, inasmuch as we obtain them. If a man prays, with fervour and a longing and yearning heart, to God for reaching Him, he shall be able to realize Him. 22.

Obscene songs also can be intoned in the same mode in which songs on divine truths can be sung. God exists both in the high and the low. 23.

Even if the flint-stone be knocked again and again, all the sparks abounding in it do not come out. Only those sparks, that come forth and operate, are qualified and active. The remaining ones are non-qualified and non-active. In the same way, the same Eternal, Conscious Being is simultaneously qualified and non-qualified and active and non-active. 24.

Merely the sight of the flint-stone does not enable us to see the fire inside it. Merely the sight of the Universe does not enable us to see the Supreme Lord pervading it. 25.

The flint-stone is, as it were, the non-conscious (inanimate) substance, and the fire inside the same Consciousness (or the conscious Being). 26.

When water is heated with fire, the former does not change into the latter. But the heat of the fire remains evidently pervading the water for a while. Indeed, a *jeeva* is not *Brahman* (the Eternal); but the energy of the Latter may remain manifest in the former in the same way. 27.

Each *Sadhu* and each great man (in the sphere of righteousness) is, as it were, a separate light. He cannot illuminate the world. He can supply (the) light (of knowledge) to a limited number of people of limited areas only. But a Perfect *Avatar* of the Lord is, as it were, the full moon of the sky. He can supply (the) light (of knowledge) to all the people of the world. 28.

All small objects are not of small value (or of a low price). There are such small diamonds and pearls as are very valuable (or costly). A guinea is of a small size ; but its price is Rupees ten,

nay sometimes exceeds the amount. All men possessed of the small body composed of the five elements are not of small value. The Embodied Lord transcends all values. 29.

The Qualified, Embodied Lord is of matchless beauty and incomparable attributes, fascinates the whole world and captivates the heart. 30.

According to Western Astrology and Geography, the Earth is revolving ; but we find it to be stationary. Now, can we deny that the Earth is in motion, since it appears to us to stand still ? In fact, those, whose minds have not been purified with supreme devotion, find the images of Gods and Goddesses to be non-conscious ; but real, pure devotees find them to be conscious, indeed. 31.

There is oil in the kernel of a ripe co-coanut and dry oil-seeds ; you can see that by putting them into the oil-mill and getting them squeezed in it. There are various Gods and Goddesses unmanifest in the non-conscious images of Theirs ; you can see that by the light of devotion. 32.

We should not utter such words and do such acts as may prove beneficial to us but injurious to others. We should utter such words and do such acts as may prove beneficial both to us and others. 33.

If I find fault with others, I too cannot pass my time happily and peaceably. Besides, I become a source of unhappiness and disquiet also to the man whom I charge with a fault. It does not become one to do an act that may serve to deprive one and another person of happiness and peace of mind. If I hate, be angry with and bear ill-will towards a man, both I and he are bereft of the two previously-mentioned blessings of life. This is why I should harbour no passion, ill-will and hatred towards another person. 34.

Songs sung by a man, who has no knowledge of musical tunes, are devoid of melodious notes ; but those chanted by one well-skilled in music appear agreeable to us. The recital of the scriptures performed by a man devoid of devotion does not appeal to us, but that performed by a devotee proves quite charming. 35.

If poison be stealthily mixed with milk, the mixture puts to death even him who drinks it in ignorance. In the same way, even if a man utters the Name of *Hari* unknowingly, he reaches liberation. 36.

Wisdom is the only bridge over which one can cross the ocean of the world. 37.

A learned man can impart knowledge to an ignorant man ; a wise man can impart wisdom to an unwise man ; and a devotee can impart devotion to one devoid of it but not vice versa. 38.

A learned man does not become ignorant by association with an ignorant man. A real *Sadhu* (righteous man of renunciation) does not become unrighteous by association with a non-*Sadhu* (unrighteous man). 39.

The attainment of perfection by the resort both to the paths of devotion and wisdom entitles the perfected souls to reach an immutable state. A really perfected man imbibes the dispositions, tendencies, inclinations and characteristics neither of *Sadhus* nor of non-*Sadhus* nor of libertines nor of other ill characters by association with them. If you find any man (who has assumed the garb of a *Sadhu*) to be influenced by the company he keeps, he is not a *Sadhu* but a hypocrite. 40.

I can close my eyes of my own free will ; but sleep does not consist in closing the eyes merely ; still, the eyes remain closed in the state of sleep. Indeed, there is a gulf of difference between real ecstasy and assumed ecstasy (*bhaba*). 41.

He, who clings firmly to the belief that his mother is making preparations for providing food for him and will call on and feed him betimes, does not move about anxiously for making arrangements for his meals. He, who has robust, unshaken faith in and hence firmly relies upon the Mother of the Universe, the Primordial *Sakti* (the Goddess of Energy), does not strive for the attainment of devotion and love (towards the Supreme). Even if a man strives for reaching them, they cannot be won without the will of the Primordial *Sakti*. 42.

I am not the body ; I am (the soul) clad with the body.

I am not the form ; I am (the soul)^t possessed of the form. So long as I am an embodied (corporeal) being I am qualified and 'formed' ; when I shall be dissociated from the body, I shall become non-qualified and 'formless'. 43.

When you are absorbed in sleep, you lie unconscious of the external world. If at that time your body be oppressed with fire or struck by a sword, you are roused from sleep and suffer. But if, after one's death, one's body be burnt and struck by a sword, one does not suffer in the least. Hence can we infer that the body and the soul holding the body (*dehi*) are separate from each other. We are '*dehis*' and ours are the body. We can see the latter but not the former. 44.

If I had been '*Brahman*' (the Supreme, Eternal Being), I would not have lost 'I-consciousness' in my sleeping state. If there had been no *Brahman* to subject me to that state, I would not have fallen in that helpless condition. Hence do I infer that I am not free, I am not the Lord but I am the servant. 45.

When, inspite of my existence in my sleeping state, I lie unconscious of it (my existence), how can I then deny the existence of *Brahman*, (because I am not conscious of it) ? 46.

Suppose that a man is staying in a dark room and that another man has entered into it without a light. In this case the latter cannot know that another individual is living there. But if the former makes any sort of sound, the latter can know that there is in the room some body else besides himself but cannot see him without a light. The large house of the Universe is enveloped in the darkness of ignorance. The Lord remains very much concealed in that deep darkness. He alone, to whom He makes known His existence therein by making any sort of sound or sign, can realize it. But unless the darkness of ignorance is removed, He cannot be seen. 47.

There is 'A' (*Akara*) concealed in every Consonant (in the Bengali language). An ignorant man cannot know it. Those, who have not attained the light of wisdom, can neither see nor realize the Lord, although He pervades unmanifest every object of the Universe. 48.

He alone, who has brought under his control and lords it over

his mind and who has held the six passions in submission to his will and subdued them, is, indeed, *Shiva*, a really Valiant Man and Hero who has succeeded in observing courageously and creditably the most trying, mystical, religious practices enjoined by the *Tantras*. 49.

A Real *Purusha* (Heroic Soul) can do whatever he wills. The Real *Purusha* is *Shiva* and not a *jeeva* (or individual). An individual cannot do whatever he wills. 50.

If I represent myself as a devotee, I shall indulge in egotism. Ah ! where is my devotion ? Indeed, I don't know how to pay my reverences to God ! I have not been able to bear even the slightest degree of love and devotion towards, reverential faith in and affection for the Lord. But He does not show His mercy to me in return for them. (His is causeless mercy). Real love and mercy and kindness cannot be had in exchange of anything. He grants us these blessings disinterestedly. He is naturally inclined to show His mercy to and love His creatures. 51.

No animal can live an absolutely solitary life. He, who can do so, is not an animal. 52.

It is better to be charmed with the qualities than with the beauty of an object. It is better to be charmed with none of them than with the qualities. The fascination for beauty cannot last long but that for the qualities can do so. It is, however, by far the best thing to be enchanted with the beauties and qualities of the Lord ; since that leads to one's welfare. 53.

All feelings, sentiments, passions, faculties and phenomena of mind, which include discrimination, dispassion, bliss, sadness, wisdom, unwisdom, happiness, sorrow, good reason, bad reason and so on—are illusory. No state which is free from illusion can come within the domain of the states and processes of the mind ; such a state transcends the mind and all the operations of its phenomena. So that is indescribable. 54.

He, who has a mind, has various feelings, emotions, inclinations, tendencies, sentiments, thoughts, passions, attitudes and so on. An atheist has the tendency to deny and a theist to believe in the

existence of God. A wise man is possessed of wisdom and a knower of *Brahman* is possessed of knowledge. A devotee is endowed with the attitude of devotion and a lover with that of love. 55.

Attachment for any worldly object is bondage. Attraction for any household (or worldly) affair is a tie. 56.

All sorts of connection are fetters. 57.

Kindness and unkindness are both trammels; freedom from these is liberation. 58.

Renunciation of selfishness is liberation. 59.

Sun-rise scares away gloom. The appearance of the sun of wisdom scares away the gloom of ignorance. 60.

One blind man cannot lead another blind man. One ignorant man cannot impart learning to another ignorant man. One cannot teach another person the art and science of vocal and instrumental music, unless one be well-skilled in them. One unwise man cannot impart wisdom to another unwise man. 61.

The skin can without delay be fully separated from the pulp of a green plantain, if it be boiled. If the mind, that is covered with the skin of *Maya*, be boiled in the water of devotion, the latter (*Maya*) can soon be dissociated from the former (the mind). 62.

If a *mantra* (holy, mystic formula) be simply muttered into the ear of an individual, that will not lead to his liberation. It (the *mantra*) should be surcharged with the spiritual power to liberate. An ordinary, professional, spiritual guide (who is not an illumined man of God-realization) is incapable of furnishing the *mantr* with the spiritual power to liberate the disciple from the ties of the world. So his disciples, too, are not freed from animality. 63.

None of the things we enjoy in the world belong to us. If they were ours, we could carry each of them along with us after our death. All the things of the world are the Lord's. We give Him nothing in return for the enjoyment thereof and we have also nothing to give. So we enjoy them all through His love, indeed. 64.

This world and this body can be likened to a rented house.

A tenant does not live for ever in such a house. A person also does not dwell for ever in his body in this world. A tenant has to pay rents for the house hired by him. But we give and we have also to give the Lord nothing as the rent both for the world and the body we live in. We reside therein through His mercy without giving Him anything in exchange of or without paying any price for what He has been graciously pleased to lend us the use of. 65.

If the body of a man had been free from any ailment and disease, if it had been an eternal substance, if he (the man) had not been subjected to various sufferings caused by birth and death, if he had enjoyed perpetual happiness and if his wealth, children, wife and other relations had been perpetual, then all men would have turned atheists; then none would have worshipped and adored and muttered, uttered and chanted the Names of the Ruler of the Universe. As those are not eternal, as those occasion sorrows and as those are full of troubles, man seeks eternal bliss or happiness. This bliss or happiness is yielded by the sight and enjoyment of the Lord. 66.

To pray to the Lord for anything is desire, too. 67.

Householders (or worldly men) cherish no superior desire to the craving for the enjoyment of perpetual happiness, peace and bliss through eternity in the world of *Vishnu* or heaven. But the longing to merge in *Brahman* (the Eternal) is a far superior desire to the previously-mentioned craving. There is no other desire that is higher than that. 68.

Disinterested devotees are very few in number. Such a devotee fully relies upon the Lord. Indeed, he, who has full reliance upon Him, remains contented with whatever condition He pleases to place him in. 69.

Indeed, a devotee, who is free from all desires, is quite unselfish. 70.

Everything belonging to him, who has, by the grace of God, dedicated his life to Him, is at His disposal. 71.

Pure devotion begets purity of conduct (or practice) but not vice versa. Many become accustomed, by making efforts, to conform

'to the established rules of pure conduct but lack devotion. Purity of conduct may result from practice (or efforts made for acquiring it); but that is not the case with pure devotion. 72.

The moon and the sun appear not according to our will but when it is the time for them to do so ; when they rise, they are visible to us also. When it is the time for the Lord to manifest Himself, He does so not in compliance with our wish but of His own free will. When He reveals Himself, He is also visible to those among us who are endowed with divine vision. 73.

Those, who have the power of seeing, can catch sight but not hold of the moon and the sun, when they rise in the sky. Some great souls can see the Lord, no doubt, but cannot reach Him. Some, however, can, by His grace, both see and touch Him. 74.

A man, devoid of the power of seeing, can see nothing, even if there be no gloom and no fog. One devoid of the vision of wisdom cannot see God, even if He stands before one. 75.

Nothing falls within the purview of the eye in deep gloom in spite of eye-sight ; again, things enveloped in thick fog are dimly visible in spite of that (eye-sight). The Lord veiled in the gloom of *Maha-Maya* (Primal Illusion) does not come in sight, although the eye of wisdom remains open. It is difficult to see distinctly the Lord enveloped in the fog of *Maha-Maya*, although the eye of wisdom remains endowed with the power of seeing. 76.

No work can be free from desire ; all works are full of it. 77.

If there be no egotism, there can be no anger ; the former engenders the latter. 78.

If the remedies administered by a doctor, a *Kaviraj*, a *Hakim* and an *Abadhuta* be simultaneously applied to a patient, he is not benefited. If various tenets (or religious disciplines) are practised at the same time by an aspirant, it does not prove beneficial to him. 79.

Practices are observed for the realisation of desires. 80.

The amount of happiness, that can be derived from the hearing, speaking and reading, with pure devotion and love, of subjects

dealing with the Lord, cannot be attained by performing those works while observing practices full of desires. 81.

If the attention be diverted to something else while one remains employed in writing what is connected with one's office-work, one cannot do one's duties systematically, but commits mistakes. When you will undertake to do a work, your mind should be applied closely to that alone and nothing else. What will you achieve by merely counting silently over the beads of a rosary or by being engaged in mere contemplation, if you do not keep your mind fixed on the Lord ? 82.

The Lord can be seen not while an aspirant is engaged in the practice of religious austerities but when he has reached the state of perfection. This state is attained as soon as the Lord becomes visible. 83.

One can neither attract nor control another person's mind either by giving him money or by entertaining him with delicacies. One can do so only by love and the extraordinarily attractive power given by God. 84.

If there be no inner attraction, one does not weep for one's separation from another. He alone, who has an inner attraction for the Lord, weeps for his separation from Him. 85.

Neither entreaty nor solicitation can generate (in one) love (for God). The moral cognition that it is one's duty to love (God) does not generate (in one) the noble feeling. To love (God) is not a matter of duty. It develops spontaneously in the heart out of inner attraction for God. 86.

Without love one cannot feel the pangs of separation from another. Without love one cannot feel joy after meeting (or being united with) another. Verily, love lies at the root of (the feeling of the pang of) separation, of (the desire for reaching) union and of (the feeling of) joy (after the achievement of the much-desired union)- 87.

Gold, that is quite free from dross, is, as it were, love. The dross is desire or lust. Water, that is quite free from dirt, is, as it were, love. The dirt is desire or lust. Unadulterated *ghee* is, as it

were, love. And honey or wax, the oil of the opium-poppy, the co-coanut and of almond, and fat, that are mixed with it (*ghee*), are, as it were, desire or lust. 88.

Real compassion (or kindness) and love are always free from desire (or lust). 89.

A real lover does not crave for love in exchange of it (love). Love knows no barter or exchange. 90.

Fire and water cannot be kept bound in cloth. The water of love and devotion and the fire of wisdom cannot be kept bound in the cloth of the body. 91.

Love, attachment (mineness) and affection are very delicate things. They are not developments from the crookedness of reason (or intellect or intelligence). This latter is the weaver's shuttle. The cloth of stratagem can be woven by it. 92.

Love, attachment (mineness) and affection are natural. None of them are unnatural. 93.

If it be held that the Lord is under the control of or submissive to the devotion and love of a devotee, then it is openly declared that He is inferior to and more insignificant than love and devotion and His lover and devotee ; then it is openly declared that He is also fallen into subjection to, a servant of and bound to them, nay they are superior to Him. It is not easy for an individual to develop and bear love and devotion towards the Lord. He is not possessed of such love and devotion as can bring the Lord under his control, as can render Him submissive and a servant to him and as can bind Him to him. Indeed, it is out of mercy and love towards him that He reveals Himself and becomes submissive to him of His own free will. It is of His own accord that He attaches Himself to His devotee sometimes as his Master, sometimes as his Son, sometimes as his Daughter, sometimes as his Father, sometimes as his Mother, sometimes as his Friend, sometimes as his Servant, sometimes as his Spiritual Guide, sometimes as his Spiritual Preceptor, sometimes as his Wife and sometimes as his Husband. 94.

The Blessed *Radhika* bore towards the Blessed *Krishna* (supreme, divine) love ingrained in (the ecstatic emotions of a

sweet-heart or) the pure, sweet attitude of the wife towards the husband. It is beyond the limit of a doubt that that love was quite free from the putrid smell of lust which is a characteristic of an ordinary, ignorant man. Indeed, many men have developed dispassion and aversion towards the world and affection for *SriKrishna* after obtaining a small fraction of Her attitude of love towards HIm. Aha ! can anybody imagine how incomprehensible, how indescribably sweet, how superearthly and how pure was Her love, after attaining merely a fragment of which one becomes quite dispassionate and averse to the world and develops a great yearning and longing to reach, nay love for *SriKrishna* ? 95.

The wife of a Judge has a definite idea of the lofty position occupied by her husband ; still she regards him as her dear husband and (does) not (respect him) as the Judge. The cowherdesses of Brindaban knew *SriKrishna* to be God or the Lord ; still they looked upon Him as their Beloved Husband and (did) not (revere Him) as the Mighty Lord, the Supreme Ruler of the Universe. 96.

You know that your father is *your mother's* husband ; but you do not regard him as *your* husband. The attitude towards God that lies latent in a man (or that is part and parcel of his nature) becomes subsequently developed. 97.

Those, who bear towards the Lord the attitudes of parental love and friendship and the sweet attitude of a wife towards her husband, are not His *bhaktas* (devotees) but *premikas* (lovers). His servants are His *bhaktas*. 98.

Parents' affection for their children never disappears ; and the attitude of the man, who has developed parental affection for the Lord, never decays. 99.

The name obtained by a man on the occasion of his rice-giving ceremony in his childhood never changes in his boyhood, youth, full-grown age, and even old age, nay in his poverty and affluence. He passes through various stages and conditions in life since his childhood ; but the same name is retained by him till death. When the life of *sannyasa* is adopted by a man, what is required is not the renunciation of his name along with that of the stage of the householder's life but the renunciation of the character of the house-

holder. Nothing elevating is achieved in renouncing the garb of a house-holder, if a man does not become a *Sannyasin* by nature. 100.

A real *Sannyasin* needs neither a throne nor a *Math* nor honour nor praise nor occupation. 101.

Many mountaineers dwell in hollows among mountains. Many of them dwell in huts thatched with leaves. So residence in those places does not enable one to become a *Sadhu* (a righteous man of renunciation). 102.

All lower animals remain naked. Such is also the case with many mad men, infants, boys, and girls. So one cannot become a *Paramahamsa* by remaining naked. 103.

It is possible to imitate the garb but not the character of a *Sannyasin*. 104.

If a bait be not attached to a fish-hook but simply tied to a thread and then cast into a pond, which abounds in large fishes, they take the bait and swim off and not a single fish is caught. If the bait of devotion remains attached to the fish-hook of dispassion fastened to the thread of faith tied to the fishing rod of the mind of an individual, then the Fish of the Lord can be caught from the ocean of the world. 105.

A leech moves about from one place to another and from one object to another in a garden in the rainy season ; but if it can manage to settle upon any person's body, it no more moves but goes on sucking blood happily. The leech of an individual's mind whirls about from one subject to another until it can suck the blood of love from the hallowed Feet of *Hari* (the Lord). 106.

Can there be a person who does not wish and desire to be free from ailments and diseases, who does not wish and desire to pass his days in a state of freedom from difficulties, dangers, fear, diffidence and hesitation and also in the enjoyment of ever-lasting pleasures, amusements and festivities and of enduring happiness and comfort and eternal bliss, who does not wish and desire to see his children escape death and live in a state of freedom from maladies and ill-health and also in a state of the enjoyment of eternal happiness, comfort, peace and bliss, and ever-lasting amusements and pleasures

and who does not wish and desire to achieve anything he pleases to do ? But we cannot conduct ourselves unrestrainedly and waywardly. No *jeeva* (individual) can do anything he wishes. This is why I say that no *jeeva* can be arbitrary in conduct, of unrestrained behaviour and follow his own inclination and that no *jeeva* can be the *doer*, independent, omniscient, powerful and omnipotent. As neither a *jeeva* nor nature can be so, it becomes us to admit the existence of *Brahman* (the Supreme, Eternal Being), since the above-named potentialities and powers belong to *Brahman* alone. 107.

Those, who are given to take physical exercises and practise athleticism and also those, who are devoted to the acquisition of learning or are engaged in studies, should not indulge in sexual intercourse ; but *Sannyasins* and *Yogis* should totally abstain from holding it. 108.

A *Sannyasin* is strictly forbidden to take part in all sorts of amorous sports. But a real *Sannyasin* is quite free from the passion of lust ; so he does not at all feel inclined to hold sexual commerce ; so he does not feel attached to a young woman as well. 109.

A *Sannyasin* has reached liberation and perpetual bliss. Real *sannyasa* (renunciation) is liberation but the assumption of the garb of a *Sannyasin* is not so. 110-

Sannyasa does not beget a sense of disappointment or mortification in a real *Sannyasin*. But this sense preys upon a man who is a *Sannyasin* in garb merely but not in spirit. 111.

Whenever I shall really feel that I have nothing in this world, I shall develop true dispassion, aversion and indifference. I shall not be able to cross over the bounds of selfishness so long as I shall be given to feel that I have something. 112.

Sannyasa proper consists neither in assuming the garb of a *Sannyasin* nor in having a new name after renouncing the one borne in the stage of the householder's life and assuming the aforesaid garb. Real *sannyasa* lies in the spirit of renunciation. A person need not render his body a *Sannyasin* after furnishing it with the guise of one. Let his mind become a *Sannyasin* or a person need not become a *Sannyasin* physically after furnishing his

body with the guise of one. Let him become a *Sannyasin* mentally or in mind). 113.

Childhood, boyhood, youth, full-grown age and old age do not come at my pleasure. I cannot transform childhood into youth and youth into childhood. When it is the time for them to come, they appear ; I cannot reverse it. When it is the time for dispassion to develop in any person, it must develop ; none can prevent it. When it is not the time for it (dispassion) to come, none can create it 114.

When, according to the will of God, the time for a person to die of a terrible disease comes, his death cannot be prevented, even if all the remedies are applied to the disease. When, at His pleasure, the time for one to develop dispassion for and aversion to the world comes, the beauty and accomplishments and youth of one's surpassingly beautiful, accomplished and young wife and one's vast wealth, high reputation and lofty position cannot obstruct them (dispassion and aversion to the world). 115.

Dissociate the mind from all worldly attachments ; what will you achieve, if you dissociate the body ? When the mind will be freed from all worldly attachments, the body will remain unshaken and firm in the midst of both good and bad associations. The dissociation of the body (from worldly attachments) does not lead to that of the mind ; but the dissociation of the mind leads to that of the body. 116.

FINIS.

Om Tat Sat !
Om ! Om !! Om !!!

SOME APPRECIATIONS

Rai Bahadur Sj. Khagendra nath Mitra, M.A., formerly Professor of Philosophy, Presidency College and University of Calcutta, Inspector of Schools, Burdwan and Presidency Divisions, Bengal, Ramtanu Lahiri Professor (and at present) Fellow, Calcutta University—

"I have read with great interest the advance copy of the life of Sri Sri Nityagopal. It is a privilege I value so much, because one cannot read the life sketch of a saint without sure spiritual benefit to himself. Here the writer is a disciple of the eminent personality whose teachings and miraculous deeds are recorded in these pages.

In the tenth chapter of Bhagavadgita, the Lord has told us in unambiguous language that He can be seen everywhere if one has the eyes to see."

"Whatever is vast, good, auspicious or mighty, understand thou (Arjuna) that it exists as a portion of my splendour."

To us mortals enmeshed by unbreakable chains of desires, where is the possibility of realising that Beatific vision which is the crowning glory of human existence? We see things, no doubt but we are no 'seers'. A seer is one who sees Truth. We see mere shadows. The word 'Darsan' in the sense of 'Philosophy' makes the function of the ordinary eyes nugatory, so far as spiritual things are concerned.

There can be no spiritual vision without Realisation and no realisation is possible without Divine Grace manifested through the lives of Saints sent down on earth from time to time 'to bring conviction to doubting minds' and 'to win to devotion lukewarm hearts.'

Knowledge can be built on hypothesis but Love cannot. Love requires a Reality to fulfil itself—a living Reality. The worldly love binds me down to mortal things. These perish and drag me down with them in their fall.

"By all means they try to hold me secure who love me in this world. But it is otherwise with thy love which is greater than theirs, and thou keepest me free." Gitanjali (Rabindra nath.)

This is the greatest test of a saintly life—it is full of love and it is free. The life of Sri Sri Nityagopal has this undying message for all viz freedom and love. Love God, love His creation and attain freedom from the world's manifold attractions.

Sri Sri Nityagopal did not preach this religion or that ; he did not inculcate the worship of this Deity or that, but taught what may be termed Universal Religion. Just as all roads lead to Rome, so all the spiritual paths lead to One without a second.....This is above all schism, all Shibboleths for which people fight among themselves. It is such saintly personalities as the man whose life story is unfolded in this book who can rise above the pettiness, jealousy and hatred which are born of ignorance and conceit.

Of all the blessings that God can bestow on man, the supreme blessing is that by which he weans the soul from all earthly attractions. As the Lord says :

"Brahman, I destroy the possessions of him whom I bless,—possessions infatuated with which man becomes haughty and insults the world and Myself also"—Srimad-Bhagavatam.

India is fortunate in this that the Lord has not forgotten it ; He sends down teachers who serve as path finders for multitudes of weak, vacillating, mean and selfish individuals. Sri Sri Nityagopal was undoubtedly one of such Teachers. May his teachings still inspire us and show the path of righteousness in the midst of impenetrable gloom.

With humble obeisance to the Lord and His Messengers of all times and climes.".....

Dr. Sj. C. Kunhan Raja, M. A., D. Phil. (Oxon), Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, Triplicane (Madras) :—..... "I read through the life of Sri Sri Nityagopal, the Yogacharya Sri Srimat Abadhuta Jnanananda Deva, with great interest. The book was so enchanting in its narration of wonderful events that it was difficult for me to put aside the book except when I was compelled to do so by the pressure of official work which I cannot ignore.

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Before I say anything, I must express my wonder that such a book should have been sent to me, in so far as I am not at all known to the world outside ; I have done some work in Sanskrit literature and I have also done some propaganda in favour of Sanskrit literature and ancient Indian civilization. But I am still in a state of mystery about my having had such a honour to be selected for expressing an opinion about this book.

The nineteenth century is supposed to have been the age of materialism in India. But that is the century that has seen the revival of religious spirit in various forms in India, like the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Order, the Theosophical Society etc. There are few centuries in Indian history when there had been so much of religious activity in the country as in the last century.

That India should have had the fortune of the manifestation of the Lord through the person (can we call such manifestations by the term "person" ?) of the great Abadhuta shows that India is still the land of divine manifestation and that the materialism that is seen so prominently, is only a Maya ; The spiritual wealth of India is still in tact.

I have read some literature about the other Teachers like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. But I regret to have to confess that this is the first time I have the privilege to know the life history of such a great person. Having always been a keen devotee of Sri Krishna, such books have a special appeal to me.....

There was a time when there was religion among all the nations of the world ; at that time perhaps man could afford to quarrel about the superiority of this religion and that religion. But at present the question is not affecting this religion or that religion ; now the real issue is between religion and irreligion. The Teachers of ancient times preached a religion. It is on account of this new situation perhaps that the Teachers of modern times emphasize the unity of **all** religion. I find that the Abadhuta lay great stress on this aspect.

There is a large number of religiously-minded persons in

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India who are not acquainted with English, and such a book will appeal to them more than to the English-knowing public. To recover such of the English-knowing, irreligious people into the fold of religion is also a great mission, and a book like this is sure to have a great influence on the mind of such people. Perhaps it is irreligious people who become the most devout followers when they are brought into contact with such a great teacher. But I will strongly recommend that such a book be made available in Sanskrit, so that it can easily be rendered into the regional languages, with the least alteration from the vocabulary and mode of expression of the original. A rendering into an Indian language from English can have little relation to the original.

The various miracles recorded in the book are **facts** to the teachers and **manifestations** of divine glory to the devotees ; they are miracles only to those who do not believe. The book deserves to be brought to the notice of the religiously-minded people who will accept it with as much veneration as the X Skandha of the *Bhagavata Purana*.

I am very much obliged to you for selecting me as one to show the book before it is formally issued. It was a great privilege for me to have been given this opportunity to go through the whole book.....”

Sir Maurice Limford Gwyer, G.C.I.E., K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.C.L., L.L.D., Chief Justice of India till 1943 and at present Vice-Chancellor, Delhi University :—

“.....I have read the pages of the book which you were so kind as to send me..... I have now lived in India long enough to realize the enthusiasm with which a man devoted to the practice of meditation and asceticism can inspire in his followers You must let me content myself with wishing your Math well and with hoping that you will find in the subject of your book and his life a satisfactory guide through the perplexities of this difficult modern world. Beliefs held with sincerity and courage must always command respect even among those of another faith.

Believe me”

Sj. G. R. Malkani, M.A., Director, Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, East Khandesh, (Bombay) :—

“....I am thankful to you for the printed forms of the book “Sri Sri Nityagopal” sent to me.

I have read the book with great interest. You have done a distinct service by placing before a wider circle the account of the life of a great spiritual genius and teacher of men who was little known outside his province.

The book speaks for itself. One gets the impression that Sri Sri Nityagopal Dev was born a great man, and that he had not to pass through trials and tribulations of the ordinary mortal in order to reach the pinnacle of spiritual greatness. But I think that a little too much emphasis has been placed, in relating the incidents of his life, upon his super-natural powers, and too little upon the pattern of religious life which he set before the devotees. Naturally, his immediate disciples got great advantage by their association with him, while we at this distance get little by way of a new orientation of life.

I cannot conclude without confessing my limitations in giving any opinion upon a book of this sort. I am only a student of Philosophy, and I cannot judge about matters which go beyond reason.

Yours in the Lord.....”

Dr. Sj. N. V. Banerjee, M.A., Ph.D. (London), Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi :—

“..... I am exceedingly thankful to you for your kindly allowing me the pleasure and privilege of reading a proof copy of the biography of Sri Sri Nitya Gopal (Yogacharya Sri Srimat Abadhuta Jnanananda Deva)..... The book is in my opinion a valuable record of the wonderful spiritual experiences of an outstanding man of God of recent times, who exercised considerable influence over a large section of people and helped them in building up a spiritual life. In this age of unbelief this book, I am sure, will serve to draw the attention of its readers to a way of life which is now almost lost sight of, but which, indeed, contributes to real happiness. I wish the author wide popularity which he richly deserves.....”

Dr. Sj. Srikumar Banerjee, M.A., Ph.D., formerly Professor of English Literature, the Presidency College and the University of Calcutta, Principal, Rajshahi College (Bengal) and at present Ramtanu Lahiri Professor and Fellow, Calcutta University :—

".....The publication of the English Biography is quite opportune as it will convey the thrilling story to the wider world and give them an opportunity of realising the great spiritual wealth that is embodied in the very atmosphere of the culture of Bengal. The story will bring home even to the most sceptical mind the truth that the age of miracles is not yet past.

Even in the present age of science and materialism the vitality of the Hindu *Sadhana* asserts itself in the emergence of saints and prophets blessed with an intuitive insight into the mystery of divine nature, enjoying an intimate communion with the primal source of all life and transmitting the message to thousands of their disciples on the sole condition of an ardent love for and implicit faith in the preceptor. The lives of these God-gifted, God-intoxicated saints are a record of mystic trance in which the mind is centred in God and loses all touch with outer realities, broken by short intervals of awareness of the phenomenal world. They radiate joy all round them and make their followers breathe an atmosphere far removed from this gross mundane world. They thus create a heaven on earth, in which the sorrows of earthly life are mitigated and forgotten and which offers to the initiated frequent radiant glimpses of the life beyond, the eternal verity curtained off from most during their brief tenure of human existence. No wonder that persons privileged to come into intimate contact with such rare souls and having a firsthand knowledge of their miraculous, superhuman powers have treated some of them as Avatars or Incarnations of Divinity.

Sri Sri Nitya Gopal Dev enjoys, along with Ramkrishna Paramahansa, the unique distinction of being looked upon as a veritable Avatar. The stories recorded in the biography of his wonderful Yogic powers, the authentic evidence of his communion with God with the directness of an almost physical realisation, the love and tenderness that he

bestowed on his disciples, the atmosphere of ecstasy that he created all round him—all these constitute an unimpeachable testimony that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our materialistic philosophy of life. That such choice spirits lived and moved among us only half a century ago, that they touched ordinary people to finer issues, that they have established a holy spiritual order which offers solace and self-realisation to those whom our worldly life cannot enchain in its meshes are matters which open up vistas of unlimited possibility before our imagination. They prove that the Hindu conception of God and of spiritual discipline holds good even today and offers a sure guidance to those who want to avail themselves of it through the dark intricate ways of modern civilisation. The self-congratulation that such a thought awakens is tempered by a sharp pang of regret when we realise how few of us have cared to cultivate our great heritage and to retain their soul in its native purity in which the image of Infinity may mirror itself. The present generation of Hindus, with their political manœuvrings, their repudiation of the eternal values of life for petty temporal gains, their base traffic in self and lust for unlawful gain, their interest in anti-social trade and commerce, presents a sorry spectacle of degradation from their erst-while lofty ideals. As we contemplate present-day life, "From what height to what depths fallen"—is the exclamation that automatically rises to our lips.

And yet we need not give way to despair. The sprouting forth of a solitary blossom during a period of drought affords welcome proof that the sap of life has not entirely run dry, fortunately for us the great tradition yet survives. Our link with the great past of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the period of Tantric Renaissance continues unbroken, thanks to the emergence of great spirits among us in the course of centuries. Ramprasad, Ramkrishna, Vivekananda, Nitya Gopal—these have kept alive the holy fire of the sacrificial altar. It is through their mediation that we still feel our nearness to God, we see the Mother with tender outstretched arms offering to fold us in Her embrace. We hear the flute sounding for ever in the sacred groves of

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Brindavan' weoing us with its sweet-caressing cadences, with an irresistible urgency of appeal. Our invaluable treasure has been saved from waste and squandering, though it lies locked up in the inmost consciousness of a few chosen spirits. The problem today is how to find the key which will throw open this secret treasure to the general mass, how to socialise this wealth by making it available for common use. Our ancestors solved this problem with a measure of success to which the history of the world offers no parallel. The great task of disseminating our spiritual heritage awaits us today and offers an intriguing challenge to our resourcefulness. We are free in a political sense, but our freedom has not led to a discovery of our soul which yet continues in a state of comatic slumber as an effect of the doses of poison so liberally administered during the days of her bondage. Let us fervently hope that those who have had the good fortune to taste the nectar of spiritual realisation will do everything in their power to make others drink of the same celestial cup. Let light be kindled from soul to soul, from the initiated to the uninitiated, till our common human life is enveloped in a blaze of supernal glory. Let us prove to the world that the various incarnations of God among us from age to age have not gone in vain. I offer my humbe prayer at the feet of the Great Master whose wonderful life is recorded in the following pages for the benefit of humanity at large and fervently hope that he himself will devise means through which his great message will come to dwell among us as a living force, as a pervasive influence teaching us the ultimate meaning of life and how it is to be lived".....

Dr. Sj. B. L. Atreya, M. A., D Litt., University Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy, Chief Warden, Birla Hostel, Benares Hindu University, Birla Visiting Professor to America :—“Saints are as great an asset of human society as scientists, philosophers and reformers are. Nay, perhaps greater. For, they succeed in embodying in themselves the high ideals of humanity which remain out of reach of the ordinary man. They are what every one would like to be, but cannot easily be. Some are born saints, others achieve sainthood by ceaseless efforts of this life. Both of the types are a challenge to materialism and secularism of the present age. Their existence is a solace and a support to the sinking idealism and spiritualism.”

Any true account of the life and experience of a saint, therefore, is a great gift to humanity. It is as valuable to modern man as an account of the discoveries and inventions of a scientist. With this view, I welcome a biographical sketch of the Yogacharya Sri Srimat Abadhuta Jnanananda Deva, entitled as Sri Sri Nityagopal. If the description of facts and experience given in this book is true, and I have no reason to doubt except the general psychological tendency on the part of disciples to extol their spiritual teachers, the book is a highly valuable document and a great contribution to the biographical literature of the world. It is written in a pleasing style and deserves a place in every library which collects books on humanities”.....

Sj. S. L. Dar, M.A., L.L.B., Professor of Philosophy, Benares Hindu University :—“Sri Sri Nityagopal.

This is a detailed life sketch of Yogacharya Sri Sri Nityagopal Deva who was a fully illumined Yogi with marvellous powers over the forces of nature both in the visible and the invisible worlds. The account of his birth and childhood compares well with that of a Divine Avatar such as Lord Krishna. The miraculous incidents of Yogacharya’s life read like a fairy tale.

Each chapter is very appropriately prefaced by inspiring verses of Bhagavad Gita which lends a sacred charm to the contents of the chapter. It is a fascinating and absorbing reading during which one is apt to lose himself and forget the idea of time. Here and there it is adorned with interludes of prayerful and inspiring verses.....

Yogacharya's life represents the true character of the life of a Bhakta as depicted in the Gita. He truly lived the Gita. His life clearly proves that the restrictions of religion, caste and rituals are not for the enlightened one though they have their use for the un-enlightened. *It is full of incidents where one who "came to scoff remained to pray."* It describes and illustrates the glory of Kirtan and singing of Lord Hari's name very effectively.

Yogacharya set an example of extreme tolerance.....

The book on the whole is a pleasant reading and provides material for thought".....

(An extract from Sj. S. L. Dar's letter)...“I have no doubt that the book when it is published will enrich the world and thrill the heart of every true Bhakta”.....

Professor Sj. A. C. Mukherji, M. A., Head of the Department of Philosophy and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Allahabad :—“.....From the incidents recorded here of the life of the Yogacharya Abadhuta Jnanananda the inference is irresistible that he was a born mystic. The Yogacharya's life, like that of every other mystic, will always remain a great challenge to our intellect and our ordinary capacity to understand the mysteries of the universe. The mystic experiences, in spite of all that has been done in this field, have still remained a more or less unexplored region defying explanation according to the ordinary canons of knowledge ; and their bearing on the study of human mind and their metaphysical implications are yet to be fully recognised by the orthodox psychologists and the metaphysicians. So far as modern psychology is concerned, its materialistic and physiological outlook has rendered it unfit for appreciating the deeper secrets of the mind ; modern metaphysics, on the other hand, particularly in the western countries, has recently developed an equally anti-spiritualistic tendency with its emphasis on the physical avenues of knowledge. The result is that the mystical experiences, which by their very nature cannot fit into the scheme and laws of the physical science, naturally breed scepticism in the modern man. For a correct evaluation of these experiences man must free himself from the tyranny of the physical method of explanation ; and here the mystical literature should provide him with

the necessary weapons with which he can fight the battle of emancipation from the tyranny of the current methods of interpretation. *In this regard, the life of Sri Sri Nityagopal has a great significance and, as I have said above, it is a challenge to the materialistic outlook of the modern man*.....

Sj. S. N. Dandehar, Principal, Sir Parashurambhai college, Poona—2 (Bombay) :—“.....Sri Sri Nityagopal is an account of the life-history of a great Bengali Saint who flourished towards the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the century in which we are living. The book also gives in about forty pages a few selected sayings of Sri Sri Nityagopal, otherwise also known as Yogacharya.

Even though our century is said to be the century of psychology, there are some of its branches which are not yet well developed. For instance, the science of the Psychology of Religion is practically a young science. Though the field for expansion is very vast not much has been done in this science because it is very difficult to obtain reliable data by an examination of which certain definite generalisations could be made. In matters physical, it is easy to have both materials for study and the laboratories to study them. It is easy to get sodium, hydrogen etc. and to make experiments upon them. But how can we command ecstasies, spirit of renunciation, chaste life and where can we have laboratories in which they can be tested? *For these we have to depend upon sadhakas and saints—who are, however, unfortunately very very rare in this world.* The Gita says, “Out of thousands of men, hardly there is one who tries to seek perfection. Out of such infinite number of sincere aspirants there is hardly one who reaches perfection.” *However, it is these saints who are mines that will supply us the data for study. But as we have said these are very rare.*

In the absence of this source, the next best source is the lives of such men written by persons who can understand them and thus who can be relied upon. The book ‘Sri Sri Nityagopal’ is happily a life of a great mystic written by his closest disciple. It will thus make a great contribution to the

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science of the psychology of Religion. And I congratulate the author for producing this book at a time when the attention of the psychologists is drawn to religious problems.

Sri Sri Gopal entered mahasamadhi in 1911. Hence even to-day must be found men and women who had the good fortune to see him or to enjoy the blessings of his saintly company. It is thus possible to verify the truth of many wonderful details given in this book. The great works performed by such men and the visions experienced by them have been styled as 'miracles' and 'fantasies'; and these men themselves are called sometimes as 'lunatics'. *I am sure a reading of a book of this type will show that these great works can be rationally explained and their experiences can be proved to be facts which form a part of highly rational men.*

To a devout soul, this book is a great mine of joy and inspiration. It will serve as a torch that will shed light on a path proverbially known to be steep and dark.

I have no hesitation in saying that this book is a nice and important addition to the books on religious psychology. The book is written in a simple narrative style and is free from technical terms. It makes a delightful reading. It will give reader both delight and instruction".....

Dr. Sj. M. M. Bhattacharya, M.A., B.L., P.R.S., Ph.D., Sir Gooroodass Bannerje Professor and Head of the Department of English, Calcutta University, sometime Professor, University Law College and Advocate, Calcutta High Court :—"This biography of the Bengalee Saint, Sri Sri Nityagopal Deb, has been compiled by one of his disciples, who had the advantage of close personal contact with him and who keenly appreciated the sublimity of his character and the wonderful magnetism of his personality. The compiler has drawn not only upon his own reminiscences but also upon the narration of the incidents of his life by the Saint himself. "Absorbed in intense spiritual moods, he would narrate them in the form which would convey at once the truest impression and the most instructive lessons." It is these that have combined with the author's personal knowledge to make his work remarkable from many points of view.

The life of the Saint symbolised the best spiritual culture of India. Though high-born, he renounced the world while yet a boy, practised the usual ascetic austeries and also went through strict mental discipline. The ultimate result was the attainment of *Nirbikalpa Samadhi*, the supreme reward of man's spiritual efforts. Its outward manifestations took the form of super-consciousness (or unconsciousness) during which the inner being "remained attuned to transcendental bliss. While the ecstasy lasted, the Saint would dance like Sri Gouranga and tears would roll down his cheeks."

The Saint's social life and teachings were commensurate with his spiritual realisation. They disavowed prejudice associated with age-old orthodoxy and caste distinction. *Equality of men and the feeling of brotherhood amongst them were his creed, and he preached and practised it with all the fervour and sincerity of a great and noble Soul.....*

The Yogacharya's example and teachings definitely lifted many to a higher plane of moral life. Love, sympathy and kindness were his transcendental virtues *Nobody could come in touch with his gracious personality without being chastened and sanctified.*

He loved to live amongst his followers, and to share their joys and sorrows. He would give them relief in their distress minister to their wants and guide them when they felt confused. But cloistered life and loneliness too had their attraction for him. His *sadhana* was carried on in seclusion when he cut himself off from all—even his nearest and dearest ; but he lost no time in making public what he had realised in privacy and distributing the fruits of his labours openly to all.

Thus he occasionally spent pretty long periods of time at Benares, Brindaban, Nabadwip and other holy places away from the busy haunts of men, and devoted himself to spiritual research, contemplation and intense study. Intellectual and spiritual work of this type mostly leaves no trace on the sands of time—no influence on human society. It lies hidden in the inner being of the worker and disappears along with him. But in the case of the *Yogacharya*, it led to the composition in simple Bengali of a large number of volumes some of which have deservedly

become a fruitful source of inspiration to aspirants for life divine. It is remarkable that men of diverse sects and communities, differing widely in their religious outlook and social ideals have been attracted by them. The universality of their appeal and the catholicity of their message are really unique, and it may very well be claimed that they suggest a universal religion based on a synthesis of conflicting creeds and philosophical theories which are such a characteristic feature of this vast Indian continent. Pure monotheism here flourishes along with dark polytheism. *Va shnavism* jostles here against *Saivaism* and the *Sakti* cult atheism exists side by side with fervent faith. *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshik*, *Purva-Mimamsa* and *Vedanta* here confound the most learned. Here, if anywhere, was the supreme need of a simple and harmonious creed which could be followed by the ordinary man. Here, if anywhere, was also the need of a great man in whom this simple and attractive spiritual ideal could be personified. *The Yogacharya* may be said to have fulfilled this requirement.

It is impossible to convey an adequate impression of the personality of a great teacher in a brief review of his biography, and the inquisitive public must be referred to the work itself. It is in plain and simple English and is supremely interesting. Characteristic details of the career of the Saint are clearly set forth and his teachings are lucidly explained. The outlook of the writer and his treatment of the subject mark him out as a worthy disciple of a great Master".....

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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2. Conclusions about the Ultimate Reality (or Truth)—an English rendering of the Yogacharya Sri Srimat Guru Jnanananda Abadhut Deva’s “Siddhanta Darsan.” (In preparation).

3. SriSriNityagopal—a short life (in English) of the Yogacharya Sri Srimat Guru Jnanananda Abadhut (Bhagawan SriSriNityagopal) Deva.

4. English renderings of some other works by the Yogacharya. (In preparation)

গুরু জ্ঞানানন্দ দেবের (বাঙালা) জীবনী

১। শ্রীশ্রীনিত্যগোপাল চরিতামৃত—শ্রীমৎ স্বামী ওঁকারানন্দ পরিব্রাজকাবধূত-সঙ্কলিত ও কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের “ফেলো” ও (ভূতপূর্ব) অধ্যাপক, রায় শ্রীযুক্ত খগেন্দ্রনাথ মিত্র, এম-এ, বাহাদুর লিখিত “পরিচায়িকা” সমেত এবং কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ইংরাজী বিভাগের হেড, ও ইংরাজী সাহিত্যের অধ্যাপক, ডক্টর শ্রীযুক্ত মোহিনী মোহন ভট্টাচার্য, এম-এ, বি-এল, পি-আর-এস, পি-এচ-ডি, মহোদয়, অধ্যক্ষ শ্রীযুক্ত মাধব দাস সাংখ্যতীর্থ, বিদ্যাবিনোদ, বেদান্তবাণীশ, এম-এ, মহোদয়, প্রিন্সিপ্যাল শ্রীযুক্ত চণ্ডীচরণ মিত্র, এম-এ, মহোদয়, কলিকাতা প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজ ও বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ভূতপূর্ব ইংরাজী সাহিত্যের অধ্যাপক, রাজসাহী কলেজের ভূতপূর্ব অধ্যক্ষ ও (বর্তমানে) কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের রামতন্তু লাহিড়ী প্রফেসর, ডক্টর শ্রীযুক্ত শ্রীকুমার ব্যানার্জী, এম-এ, পি-এচ-ডি, মহোদয়, দ্বারহাট্টা জ্ঞানানন্দ বিদ্যাপীঠের অধ্যক্ষ ও কাব্য-ব্যাকরণ-শুভ্রত-বেদান্ত প্রভৃতির অধ্যাপক, বেঙ্গল সংস্কৃত এসোসিয়েশনের সভ্য, সংস্কৃত লেট কাউন্সিল (বর্কমান বিভাগ), তারকেশ্বর পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্র প্রতিষ্ঠাতা ও সম্পাদক, পণ্ডিতপ্রবর শ্রীযুক্ত দাশরথি বেদান্তশাস্ত্রী, কাব্য-ব্যাকরণ-শুভ্রতীর্থ, বেদান্তভূষণ মহোদয় প্রভৃতি মনীষি কর্তৃক ও প্রসিদ্ধ সংবাদপত্রে উচ্চ প্রশংসিত।
মূল্য ৩, তিন টাকা মাত্র।

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1. Awakening or the Essence of the Determination of the Universal Religion, the translation of the Yogacharya Sri Srimat Abadhuta Jnanananda Deva's 'Chaitanya Ba Sarvvadharmanirnaysara' by Srimat Swami Nityaswarupananda Abadhuta. Highly admired by the press and great scholars as the outcome of intensive meditation, rare realization and divine wisdom.

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